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HER GUARD OF HONOR

By Miriam Michelson

"WHAT are you crying for,
my Pauline?"

There was no answer. The young woman, who had thrown her lithe full length across the bed, lay sobbing still in a passion of rage and pain.

The child repeated the question, the curves of his beautiful mouth trembling as his voice dwelt lovingly on the last two words.

He had never heard these words spoken in any tone but a caressing one. And he never used them himself without a tender emphasis on the "my." The expression came with an odd mixture of protection and proprietorship from his baby lips, which had never spoken the word "mother."

Nor was there much that is moth-erly about this panting, tossing figure in its tempest of resentful suffering.

"Oh, what are you crying for, my Pauline? Don't cry—don't—"

A regal head with a tumbling crown of gold-red hair and a bloated face, at once scornful and maddened, was lifted from the pillow.

"Hush—you!" she cried, angrily. "Keep still, Paul, keep still! Oh, that I could die! But then I must kill us both. Never shall we be separated, we two!"

The child's troubled eyes looked searchingly at her. Baby as he was, he had learned to weigh and to doubt the words his girl-mother spoke when moved by rage or grief. Violent as were these emotional storms, he already knew that they were short as violent. Usually, in his babyish discretion, he bowed his head beneath the troubled branches of the mighty, passionate maternal tree, weeping si-

lently and waiting with unchildlike patience till she became herself again. But to-day the sobs that burst from her white throat and shook her beautiful, strong body were like waves of agony sweeping out from the alcove where she lay, and threatening to wash away all his little world. Paul's heart swelled within him. He struggled pitifully to control himself, but failing, he rose to his feet and stretching out his hands to the darkened alcove, burst into a loud cry.

"Oh, my Pauline! my Pauline!"

The sound of his weeping seemed to madden the excited woman. Her own sobs choked in her throat, her quivering body was raised, and her face, white with temper, now turned toward the frightened child.

"Oh, you will cry!" she said, her voice trembling, harsh and vibrating with passion. "Little beast! I may not even suffer. Stop! stop! you tear my nerves! Stop! Will you stop? There, then!"

With a shaking hand she dragged off her high-heeled slipper and hurled it, with all the force of her nervous, high-strung temper, at the child.

She heard a sudden clap, like the hollow lifting of a horse's hoof from the mud. There was a second's terrifying silence, and then a piercing scream.

She could not have told why she did it. It was a passionate impulse. She had meant only to frighten him, this beautiful child she loved so jealously, so proudly. But accident guided the small slipper, and the metal-capped high heel hit the baby just over the left temple.

The man who had quarreled with

Pauline Berthier, and who had left a few minutes before, as she threw herself in an abandonment of sobbing rage upon her bed, heard that scream just as he put his hand upon the knob of the door two flights below.

He had sworn never to see her or their child again. But when that scream came to his ears, he stopped. Could the mad girl have carried out the threat she had so often and so theatrically made, to kill herself and the child too?

When he opened the bedroom door, out of breath with his hurried climb up the stairs again, Pauline Berthier was on her knees before the child, her arms holding his swaying figure upright, her beautiful, long white hands fluttering about his head like wounded pigeons. Tears of agony were falling over her face, and her irresistible, sweet voice was calling upon him in a flood of endearing words.

"My baby! my Paul! my little one! are you hurt? Oh, my beautiful boy! my baby! my baby!"

At the sound of the door opening behind her she turned quickly, though still clasping her child to her breast. Paul's limp little body straightened too, and he turned dizzily toward the door, his round face quite bloodless, and upon his forehead a cut which was swelling rapidly, and from which the blood trickled.

"What is it?" demanded the father, a scowl on his heavy, dark face, but relief in his eyes, which were bent threateningly on the woman. "How did it happen? Tell the truth for once, Pauline."

But she could not speak. Fear and remorseful pity choked her.

The child looked timidly up at him, a grave frown in his red-brown eyes. His little hand, stained with the blood from his forehead, he pressed protectingly about his mother's neck, and bent to lay his hurt head upon her cheek.

"Paul fell," he said, slowly, "and hurt himself."

The man stood for a moment, looking in impatient doubt from one to

the other. Then, with a muttered exclamation of disbelief, he turned and left the room as suddenly as he had entered.

The two hardly noticed his departure. Cowering before the child, Pauline Berthier covered Paul's bloody little hand with grateful, remorseful kisses.

"Oh, my baby, my adored one! Oh, how could I? How could I?"

The child looked down on her beautiful head, and on his prematurely serious young face, pale now with physical suffering, there came a smile of inexpressible tenderness.

"It doesn't hurt much. Don't cry, my Pauline," he said, in a plaintive whisper. "Paul will be good. He won't cry any more. Please, don't cry!"

"I am a cruel animal—a brute!" the young woman exclaimed, with bitter remorse. "Forgive me, my baby! My loved one, my beautiful boy!—and I might have killed him!"

She put up a hand to touch the wound, but the boy shrank, shivering apprehensively, from those long, soft white fingers.

"Ah, God will punish me for this wicked temper of mine!" she moaned. "But not through Paul—my God! my God!" she prayed, in feverish supplication.

In an hour Pauline Berthier had forgotten, and was her light-hearted, tempestuous self again. But as long as he lived Paul remembered this scene. It was the first time he and his mother had occupied the relative positions that in the years to come became so familiar.

II

PAULINE BERTHIER was born for the stage. With her beauty, her exquisitely melodious voice, her perfect taste in dress, that she inherited from her French mother; with her emotional, mercurial temperament that, on and off the stage, faithfully registered storms and tempests, Spring showers and sunshine, mad loves and

intense hates—all life-sized passions, all short-lived, each felt intensely, yet each yielding to its equally intense successor—such a creature could have lived no other life.

When she found her vocation life became much easier, much simpler, for her son. There was no longer necessity for theatrical threats, for domestic tempests, for scenes that were quickly erased from the volatile woman's mind, though they left an indelible mark on the boy's memory and character. Her work gave the impulsive creature, full of moods as a healthy animal is of blood, a vent for the variety of emotions that seethed within her. Her fame, which came while Paul was still a child, satisfied her imperious vanity, justified her capricious egotism, and opened up worlds of conquest off the stage which engaged the superfluous energy of her restless, gifted nature.

But she came back to that temporary home, which, in her wandering life, meant the furnished room where her child slept, to bathe in her pure love for him—the one fixed point in her affections about which her world of passion revolved.

The depth of her love was for him. The strength of her generous heart was for him. The fulness of her fascinating charm was for him.

She loved him. She made love to him. She openly adored his beauty, her own made masculine. She grew jealous when the other women of the theatre petted him. She pouted like a child if his admiration was not all for her. She came to confess to him the lesser faults of her rich, gracious, faulty nature. "Little Conscience," she called him. She listened meekly to his precocious, pedantic chiding. And the effect of this reversal of their natural relations was to force the boy to yield up his childhood, to become a man before he had tasted youth, to advise where he should have sought for counsel, and to feel the burden of moral responsibility for one upon whom he should have leaned.

But how he loved her, this beautiful, childlike, passionate, gifted young

mother! Of the respect which should have been half of that love Paul Berthier knew nothing.

But indiscreet, expansive, utterly thoughtless as was Pauline Berthier, there was one thing to which she never alluded—the time when the baby had lied for her sake. To Paul the memory of that time was keenest humiliation, more bitter than any personal suffering; for it was for her he was ashamed. But with the unfolding of her great genius, and the luxury and unrestricted liberty and pleasure her success brought, the ebullitions of Pauline Berthier's uncertain temper were confined to the theatre, and the hours she spent at this time alone with the boy made sweet his memory of her forever.

It never occurred to Pauline Berthier that her dressing-room and the wings of the theatre were not precisely the most suitable places for a growing boy. Her selfish love for the child was satisfied to have him near her, and the irresponsible levity of her own nature lent itself to merry mockery of the child's premature gravity and the serious purity of his mind.

She called him "Saint Paul" and "Paul the Prude" when his boyish modesty took offense at the light deportment of the stage. And none laughed more heartily than she when a chorus of the women members of the company, enjoying his distress, openly sang the praises of his beauty, and proclaimed, in exaggerated terms, the passion they declared he had awakened in them.

It was when Pauline was playing a long engagement in a Western city that Mrs. Jerome, who played the "old woman" parts, suggested to Paul that he might enjoy the performance better from the front.

There Pauline's eyes lit questioningly on him at her first entrance. In consequence, she stormed through the opening scenes and wreaked her displeasure on her unhappy maid and her bewildered manager.

Paul appeared at the door of her

dressing-room immediately after the close of the first act.

"Madame is not quite ready—" began the maid, who opened the door.

"Yes, Madame is ready!" Pauline interrupted, recognizing the boy's knock.

And tearing the door from the maid's fingers with brutal force, she pushed the woman behind her, appearing before the boy like a half-draped fury, with her beautiful gown falling from her and her tangle of hair, massed on her imperially lovely head, half undone, staining with its ruddy gold the exquisite outlines of her white throat.

"Monsieur Paul Berthier wearies, it seems, of Madame Pauline Berthier's performance," she sneered, angrily challenging him, her naked throat heaving with rage.

The child looked up at her for a moment, grave displeasure in his eyes.

"Don't anger her, for God's sake!" whispered the voice of Ricard, the manager, behind him. "She'll ruin everything."

"What is he whispering?" cried the suspicious woman. "Answer—you! Speak! In what has my acting fallen off? Are they lying, these sycophants here?" she exclaimed, flashing her superb eyes on Ricard and the crowd that had gathered behind him at the door, "are they lying when they tell me I do well? or do you pretend, my precious son—? Bah! why should I care for a spoiled baby's opinion?"

The boy caught her outstretched jeweled hand, shaking now with rage, and put it to his lips.

"Oh, my Pauline," he said, softly, leaning his head upon her beautiful arm, his voice almost as sweetly entreating as her own could be, "in front I can see you always. Back here the wings are often in the way when you move about. And often I cannot hear your voice for the whispering behind. If you could only see yourself once from in front! But I will stay behind if you—"

She caught him passionately to her breast, radiant with sudden

good humor, with gratified vanity, with the mere reaction from her short-lived, intense emotion.

"No, little artist," she laughed, "you shall stay in front—you shall be wherever you wish, my baby. You shall do whatever you will, sweet, and Pauline Berthier— Oh, what a jealous goose is your mother, my Paul! There, there! It is all over. Scatter—you!" She waved a hand to dismiss those at the door. "Do you suppose this young Puritan will permit me to dress while you all stand there gaping?"

"Pardon, Pauline, but your entrance comes early in the second act, you know," ventured Ricard, uneasily.

"Yes, yes, I know," she answered, with good nature. "Fly—all of you! I'll be there on time. And if I'm not, hold the curtain a moment."

She pushed them away merrily and closed the door behind them. Then she threw herself into a chair, stretching out a silk-stockinged, slender foot, and motioning the boy to her feet.

"You shall put on my slippers, Prince Paul," she cooed, in perfect sweet temper. "Do you know what a favor that is?"

The boy knelt before her and took the beautiful small foot in his hand. Then, blushing furiously, but with misery in his eyes, he caught her and drew her down toward him, whispering pleadingly in her pretty ear.

She threw herself back, laughing aloud; then she shrugged her magnificent shoulders pettishly, and pouted for a moment.

But she turned to the maid at length.

"Hand me a shawl," she said, watching out of the corner of her eye the boy's averted, uncomfortable face; "give me something to cover my throat. It—it's cold."

III

AFTER this Paul sat always in front, his mother's devoted admirer,

her most interested auditor; never wearying of her genius, her beauty and her grace, though he beheld her so often in the same rôle; experiencing always the same exquisite thrill of delight when the great audience was moved as he was.

"She is my Pauline," he would say to himself as he lay back in his chair, his eyes shining with pride and exaltation, while the house went mad and the thunder of its applause found an echo in the boy's thumping heart.

It was one afternoon at the close of a matinée, when the curtain had fallen for the last time, that the applause ceased suddenly, and Paul, rising slowly, half-surprised and half-resentful, saw a thin edge of flame that seemed to spurt out from the sides.

The standing audience saw it, too, and, panic-stricken, pressed toward the doors, though the danger was past in a moment and only the smell of smoke remained.

Still the frightened people surged out of the building, and the cries of women fainting with terror, of children separated from their parents, and of half-mad men making their way to safety over the bodies of the weaker ones mingled with and drowned the appealing, reassuring voice of the manager from the stage.

From his seat near the front Pauline Berthier's son had sprung upon the stage. He was just about to push his way into the smoke-clouded wings to seek his mother when he saw a little girl stretch her arms piteously up to him from below, in the almost deserted parquet.

"Boy!" she cried; "pretty boy, take Jessie up. I'm afraid. I'm afraid, and I can't find mamma!"

Paul scrambled down. The child put her arms confidingly about his neck, and he lifted her to the stage, appearing before Pauline Berthier, whom fright had shaken into hysterics, with the little girl's hand in his.

In her joy at seeing her boy before her Pauline could have embraced the whole world; just as, a moment be-

fore he appeared, she had passionately accused God and man of bringing about this accident for the single purpose of murdering her Paul and punishing herself.

"I knew nothing could happen to you, my darling. It would have been too cruel!" she cried, in a passion of delight, on her knees before him, touching with a soft, clinging pressure his shoulders, his arms, his body, to assure herself that he was uninjured.

The little girl, who stood beside Paul, her fingers clinging to his, her frightened face turning from one to another of the strange people about her, shrank from the excited woman.

"Well—and you?" demanded Pauline, when she found that her attempts to take her boy in her arms were hampered by the strange little girl, whose fingers clutched his so tightly. "What's this? Who are you?"

"Jessie," answered the child, suddenly losing her timidity, and meeting boldly the haughty, jealous eyes bent upon her.

"Ah, Jessie!" repeated the actress, scornfully. "My word!" She turned to Mrs. Jerome and Ricard, standing just behind her. "She says it as one might say 'Berthier,' if one were thus questioned. It is evident that mademoiselle is a personage at home. Jessie, indeed!"

There was an appreciative laugh from the members of the company who had watched the scene. The actors and actresses who surrounded Pauline had cause to weep when she was sad, and to laugh when she smiled. Their relief at the lessening of the tension of her mood, now that Paul had appeared, uninjured, found vent in easy, boisterous laughter.

The little stranger shrank back.

"Boy," she said, turning to Paul, "take Jessie home. Come away from them. Jessie doesn't like them. Come away, pretty boy."

Pauline Berthier caught the little thing in her strong arms and threw her up into the air, catching her as she fell.

"She is delicious," she declared.

"Pretty boy," she said, smiling mockingly down at Paul, "where did you get her?"

But the child screamed and struggled. In vain, though, for yielding, as she always did, to a sudden change of mood, Pauline held her close, as though to conquer physically the child's evident repulsion.

"Boy! pretty boy!" shrieked the child.

"You frighten her, my Pauline," pleaded Paul.

For a moment his mother looked coldly down on him. Then suddenly, almost violently, she dropped the child to the floor.

"Take your protégée, pretty boy," she said, her rouged lips curling sarcastically.

"I hate you—I hate you!" cried Jessie, jumping up from the floor where she had fallen. And running to Paul, from the shelter of his protection she stamped her foot and glared defiantly at the actress.

"*Merci*, mademoiselle!" said Pauline, bowing profoundly before the astonished child. "The sentiment is mutual, I assure you."

And she swept away to her dressing-room without a word to Paul, who stood, puzzled and bewildered, looking after her.

Old Mrs. Jerome came to his rescue.

"Pauline will be out late," she said, laying a gentle, comforting hand on his shoulder. "She is to dine, you know, with—with friends. Take the child home with you, Paul, my boy, and we'll telephone to police headquarters where she is to be found."

"But Pauline is cross," the boy said, miserably, still looking after her. "What did I do? Why is she angry with me?"

"Never mind," said the old woman, soothingly. "Come on, now. It will be all right."

"Wait—wait a minute. I'll run and kiss her good-night, anyway."

He had gently released his arm from Jessie's clutch, and had started toward the dressing-rooms, when

Pauline, her elaborate stage gown partly covered with a great cloak and a lace scarf over her shining head, came down the stage. She was surrounded by a crowd of men, and in her beautiful face, glowing like a flower beneath the warm rays of their admiration, there was no consciousness of her son's existence.

Paul's body stiffened. He watched the group till it was out of sight. Then he turned and submitted to being placed in the carriage, where the little waif beside him nestled close, dropped her head on his shoulder, and after a time, exhausted by fatigue and excitement, fell asleep.

IV

"ARE you awake, my baby?"

It was a tender whisper.

"Paul, my darling—"

The voice was trembling.

The boy stirred sleepily and opened his eyes.

His mother uttered an exclamation of delight and, lying down on the bed beside him, took him in her arms.

"And he can sleep," she whispered, with tender reproach, "without his Pauline's good-night kiss!"

Paul sat up in bed. From behind the heavy curtains the gray light of early morning came into the darkened room.

"Oh, I'm so glad you waked me, my Pauline. I waited and waited till I fell asleep at the piano. And then I went to bed, but lay awake a long, long time waiting for you. Why, it's nearly morning, isn't it, and you haven't been to bed?"

"No, my conscience," she said, humbly, rising to turn on the lights. "But tell me," she continued, hurriedly, "where is your little protégée —'Jessie'?"

She repeated the name with such a clever mimicry of the child's voice and gesture that Paul laughed aloud.

Instantly her mercurial temperament responded to the merriment in the boy's laugh. She became gaily childish herself, and quickly turning

about, she faced him in a series of quick, pantomimic poses, reproducing in fleeting sketches the little scene of the afternoon—Jessie's frightened face, Paul's perplexity and his fatherly, protecting manner to the child, Ricard's loud laugh, and her own exit, in haughty, silent displeasure.

Paul sat up in bed, his quick wit seizing it all, his small hands applauding enthusiastically, his face flushed with sleep, his eyes shining with excitement.

Pauline turned at last, with a mock bow of acknowledgment, to look at him.

"Pretty boy!" she cried, "my very, very pretty boy! Ah, your Pauline was very bad this afternoon, my heart. But she will atone. Look here! See what I have brought for you. Wait, my prince!"

She pulled a table close to the bed and deftly spread upon it the feast of dainties she had ordered as a peace offering.

"The beautiful Berthier herself will wait on you, my lord Pretty Boy," she almost sang to him, so beguiling was her full, sweet voice, "and you shall eat, and I shall drink, and we'll both be merry, and— By the way, we'll have 'Jessie' in to help us."

"No," said Paul, grown thoughtful. "Jessie is at home."

"No! Tell me; do. Why, it is quite an adventure!" she exclaimed, in childish good nature. "See, my lord Pretty Boy, I fill my glass to Jessie—the little savage, not to love your Pauline!"

And so they sat over their early morning breakfast, she waiting upon him with sweet solicitude while he ate, and listening while he talked as if each word that fell from his boyish lips were of measureless value.

"You see, my Pauline," the boy began, "Jessie didn't wake till we got home. And as I made the man drive slowly so as not to wake her, it was late. Then we played, and—"

"Played?" she repeated, jealously. It struck her suddenly that she had

never seen Paul playing with another child.

"Yes, we played," he repeated, a little abashed. "She's so little, you know, and she says Jack always plays with her, and even Billy and Arthur."

"Wait—wait. Who are they?"

"Why, her brothers. And then we had dinner, and Jessie said she thought it was fine fun—just us two at table, with Marie to wait. And I was the husband, and she called me John. That's her father's name. And she was the wife. And then she cried because it got dark, and Marie brought in the lights. And then I played on the piano for her, so she wouldn't cry. Then, all at once, there was a knock at the door, and a man and a woman came in. And Jessie—she just squealed. The lady—she was—was not like you, Pauline. Much older. No pretty clothes and—not beautiful—"

She put his hand to her lips.

"—no, but—but she was—lovely, I think. I don't know how to tell you; but the way she took Jessie up in her arms, and her kind, soft face, and her comfortable, big lap! The man put his hand on my shoulder and said I was a manly little fellow, and then the lady put Jessie down and took me in her arms, and she whispered: 'If ever, in all your life, you need a friend, remember my name—Mrs. John Turner.'

"And then she put on Jessie's hat, and Jessie was so happy! But just as they were going away her mother all at once asked me if I would be alone. And I said 'Yes.' So they took me with them.

"And I saw Jack, my Pauline, and played with him. He's such a jolly boy, laughs all the time, and makes you laugh, too. And I saw Billy and Arthur, too, and the baby. Oh, you should see the baby! It was such fun!"

"Jack's got a dog, and Billy's got a cabinet, and Arthur can jump higher and run faster than any boy at his school.

"But it's all the same to Billy and Arthur, you know, for they're twins. Isn't that wonderful? And half the

cabinet's Arthur's. And if any boy dares touch Billy he must fight Arthur too, of course, because they're twins, you see. Don't you wish I had a twin?

"And oh! Pauline—guess! Jessie is going to call her doll Pauline. Not—not—I mean, after me, you know. And I held the baby, and I sang to him, and he cooed at me, like a pigeon.

"And—oh, my Pauline, my Pauline, why haven't we a little house like that, and a father, and brothers, and a sister just exactly like Jessie, and a baby, and a mother—of course, not a mother, but—but a grandmother, like—"

He broke off suddenly. He had been so interested in his recital and the memories it evoked that he had not looked at his mother's face till now.

She was sitting back in her chair, her face quite pale, her eyes bent upon the half-empty wineglass she held, while the slow tears crept down her cheeks.

In all her life, either on or off the stage, Pauline Berthier had never wept like that.

With a plaintive cry Paul leaped out of bed. He threw himself into her arms, clasping her close and pressing his cheek to hers.

"Don't—don't cry, my Pauline. It—it hurts so. Never mind. I don't want any place but this—nor any brothers—nor anything—no sister like Jessie—only you! Hush! Don't cry like that. See, I will never go there again, never—never! Mrs. Turner said she would come and ask you to let me eat dinner with them all at one table, and that perhaps you might let me sleep one night with Jack—but I'll never go. Say something, my Pauline. Talk! Don't—oh, don't sit there like that!"

But she remained quite quiet, unresponsive to his words and caresses, utterly unlike herself, holding the boy close to her, but saying not a word to soothe him, till at last he, too, became quiet.

The lights grew pale as the morning light strengthened.

Pauline rose at last, and lifting the boy, laid him in the bed, drawing the covers about him and smoothing the pillow beneath his head. Then she fell upon her knees beside him.

"Say, 'Mother, I forgive you,' Paul," she said.

"Oh—my Pauline—" the boy began.

"Say, 'Mother, I forgive you,'" she insisted.

"Mother, I—I love you!" The words burst from his trembling lips.

"Say it, say it, Paul—I am tired. I must sleep. Say it—I cannot sleep till you do."

"Mother," the child whispered, crimson with shame and sobbing bitterly, "I forgive you."

V

THE coming of evening and the atmosphere of the theatre restored to Pauline Berthier her usual mutable pose. But the time came when the beautiful penitent realized that as he grew older her young confessor must discover the graver sins of her life. It was then that mother and son were separated, for the first time since Pauline, a wilful, undisciplined child herself, knew with terror and delight that she was a mother.

Though she recognized the necessity for the separation, she fought against it, as she fought against every thwarting of her desires, great or small. Only her great love for her son made her yield to the necessity of a change beneficial to him. But she struggled and battled, and beat her tempestuous will against the wall of her first and only self-denial.

She made the decision and she revoked it. She taunted Paul with being content to leave her, and she clasped him passionately in her arms, declaring that nothing should separate them.

In her remorse she had fostered Paul's intimacy with his new friends, and had insisted on the boy's accepting the homely hospitality that Jessie Turner's grateful mother offered

to the lonely son of the great artiste. During the last months of her engagement the pendulum of her selfish love and her loving repentance vibrated between insouciant self-indulgence and anticipatory self-denial.

Almost at the last, though, she flew to the Turners' quiet home, and, with tears and prayers, besought good Mrs. Turner to be a mother to her adored son. She returned to Paul and reproached him for not appreciating the goodness of the woman who had consented to take him into her home. She came home from the theatre and spent the rest of what was to be their last night together in remorseful prayer. She dreamed that they two were already separated and that Paul had died—far away from her. In the dawn she went into his bedroom to assure herself that all was well with him, and lifting up her hands over the sleeping child, she swore to be the woman Paul's mother should be. She waked him with her kisses and told him that no one should take him from her, and he put his arms about her neck, and wearily assented.

In the morning she could not wait to dress, but, clad only in her lace peignoir, her naked feet thrust into heelless satin slippers, she sat down to her writing-desk.

"My dear, kind friend," she wrote, in a rapid, large hand, to Mrs. Turner, "the sacrifice was too great. I cannot crucify my heart. I cannot part with him. So do not expect Paul today—or ever.

"I shall hire a tutor to go abroad with us. I shall withdraw from the world. I shall devote myself to him and to my art. I shall study with him. I shall develop his undoubted ability—so charming a gift, don't you think?—of expressing himself in music. I shall remember your example, my dear Mrs. Turner, and shall try to imitate your noble self-abnegation for your children.

"Forgive, I beg of you, all the trouble I have caused you. I know how vacillating, how weak, I appear to you. But this boy of mine is all I

have. You, who have a happy brood of babies, your good husband and your home, cannot realize how my heart clings to this, my only one, my adored Paul.

"Pray command me if ever, at any time, in any place, however distant, I may be of service to you—that I may partly repay your kindness.

"May Paul write to his little friend Jessie? His affection for my dear little enemy makes me jealous at times. And is it too much to ask of you, you busy, kind-hearted soul, to spare a moment, now and then, to send a line to yours, ever gratefully, Pauline Berthier?"

She felt better when she had written this and despatched it. She sang merrily over her toilet, and all at once was seized by a happy inspiration regarding the new rôle she was studying in anticipation of her début abroad. She dashed off a line to Ricard to tell him about this, though she expected to meet him at the theatre that evening, and then she presented her maid with the most beautiful gown in her wardrobe.

Later in the day she attended a gay breakfast, to which, in her early morning repentance, she had decided to send regrets, and returned in the dusk of the evening, to find Paul sitting alone in the early Winter twilight, half-asleep over the piano, their supper untouched, waiting her delayed home-coming.

The sight of the lonely, sensitive boy, the consciousness of a broken pledge—which she had made to herself, knowing in her heart the impossibility of keeping it—the contrast between the gay company she had just left and this prematurely serious, pale young face—it all appealed to her keen susceptibility to atmosphere, and impulsively she resolved to atone.

Without a word of greeting to the boy she rang for the maid, and with a theatrical air—a second nature, of which she was almost unconscious—she stood, still wrapped in her furs, her small cloth toque on her lovely red head, her gloved hand raised to

demand silence and to bid him wait and see.

"Master Paul's coat, his hat, his gloves," she commanded, with imperious, uncontrolled excitement. "Immediately. And the carriage!"

The boy came to her, his hands outstretched, his bewildered face raised to meet her caress.

She bent, with that exquisite refinement of grace which marked every movement of her supple body, and kissed him; but the smell of the wine on her lips repelled him.

In the dusk he could not see her face, but her cheek, as it touched his, seemed like a deep velvet rose afire.

She took his coat and hat from the maid and herself put them on him.

"Where are we going?" he asked.
"Can't we wait for dinner?"

"No," she answered, curtly. "Not for dinner, or anything else. Come! This is the last time you have waited for me. Your new mother will give you something to eat. She will not keep you waiting."

"Mrs. Turner?" he asked, amazed.
"But I thought—"

"Oh, don't! don't! don't!" she exclaimed, dropping his hand, and raging up and down now in her pain. "Don't you see how I suffer? Come, let it be quick—this killing of my heart!"

He stood still for a moment looking at her, his eyes full of unshed tears, his throat choked with grief at parting from her, and the intangible, half-suspected trouble born again in his mind as he remembered the warm breath of the wine on her lips.

But since the time, years ago, when he narrowly escaped being the victim of her uncontrollable temper, the effect of her emotion had always been to bring about a greater effort at self-control on his part. He turned now, silent, obedient, and walked toward the door.

She stopped in her wild pacing to and fro and looked after him. Every detail of his fine, slight, young figure, so smart in its well-cut suit of velvet, from the crisp red curls of his graceful head to the polished tips of his

high shoes, her eager, loving eyes took in. So tall he was growing, her boy! So prince-like he looked, clothed as her love and her pride and her artistic taste would have him! When she should see him again . . .

"Paul!" The exclamation was almost a scream of agony. "My God, how easy it is for him! He does not even see the sacrifice I am making."

He was beside her in a moment, his arms about her, as, fallen upon a couch, she burst into violent weeping.

"My Pauline! my Pauline!" he cried, the tears running down his cheeks as he pillow'd her turbulent head on his shoulder. "Don't cry. See, I won't go. I won't leave you—ever—ever, my Pauline. Hush! hush!"

She let him brush away her tears, and lay exhausted, while with an almost feminine gentleness he bathed her face and smoothed her tumbled hair. And so they sat in silence.

When she opened her eyes there was a gleam of laughter in them.

"Oh, Paul, Paul!" she said, "what a ridiculous baby your mother is, my poor Paul! It is funny—it is actually funny—"

And she laughed at her own caprices till she became almost hysterical.

He stood apart now, regarding her, shocked, startled, uncomprehending, troubled.

His trouble even the light, wine-muddled brain of the actress perceived at length. And it nerved her. She rose, desperately pulled herself to rights, hurriedly pressed his hat into his hands and half-dragged, half-led him to the door.

"Promise me," she gasped; "if you love me, promise me—not a word on the way there—not a word—if you would not have me kill myself and be done with it all!"

That long, silent drive through the dark, rainy night! For years it was Paul's nightmare. Night after night he waked to find himself sitting bolt upright in bed, his heart beating madly, his hands shaking and his eyes peering out into the darkened

room, where he fancied was outlined opposite him that unnaturally repressed, still figure, whose burning eyes fixed upon him he felt but could not see.

When the carriage stopped she took him in her arms. This time she did not weep. But she held him on her lap, great boy as he was, as though she must clasp all of his body to her breast—as though he were an infant. Her wonderful, full, deep voice, that always rose in passionate strength with her emotion, was hushed now.

Paul never could recall her words. For years he hardly dared recall that one time when she was so strong, and he was fairly shattered by her agonized, low, sweet-voiced tenderness. All the baby names she had lavished upon her first-born, her only one; all the pretty, half-inarticulate French phrases (all he knew of her father's tongue); all the hungering, jealous mother-love in her; all the unspoken prayer for pardon for his suffering and her weakness—all were expressed in the hurried, soft, whispered words and the light kisses she showered hungrily upon his brow, his eyes, his mouth, his hands.

"Now go!" she panted.

And opening the carriage door she almost pushed him out into the street.

"Drive on! Drive on!" she screamed to the coachman. "Drive, drive like mad, no matter what I say, no matter what I do! If you get me back to the theatre alone your wages are doubled. If I turn back you go this very night!"

She fell back upon the cushions, and the horses sprang forward.

The sobbing boy stood on the edge of the curb, unconscious of the heavy rain and the dark night. His very heart seemed about to burst from his breast in longing after that blazing eye—the carriage lamp—which grew fainter and fainter, and at last turned a corner and was out of sight.

Then he started to run after it, calling her name piteously and fancying he heard her calling him. And then, slowly, he walked back to the

Turners' house, drenched, shivering, so exhausted that he could only creep up the stairs and ring the bell just loudly enough to be heard.

VI

PAUL BERTHIER had fallen asleep in many places. In the hotels, where he could never get accustomed to the noisy business of the night; in his mother's brilliantly lighted little dressing-room; in old Mrs. Jerome's arms, at times, when he was ailing; on the train, frequently, when the journey was tedious; sitting before the piano, playing, or dreaming he played the melodies that sang in his soul, while he waited for his mother to come home; or stretched out upon the hard couch in the private apartment of some restaurant, while Pauline and her companions sat and ate and drank and laughed and talked, till they and the gas globes above them swam before his hot, tired eyes, and at last melted into merciful darkness.

But he had never found repose like this before.

When soft-faced Mrs. Turner came in to give a last look at her new boy, Paul pretended to be asleep. He was still so racked by the emotions he had experienced that he feared the good woman's tenderness.

But after she had gone, and all the lights were out, and every noise was hushed, the boy opened his eyes and sat up in bed in the darkness, that he might the more fully feel the exquisite comfort of this beautiful bedtime.

To the right of his small bed was another, and here Jack lay, his close-cropped flaxen head almost covered by the comforter. Beyond, in the double bed, Billy and Arthur lay side by side, their arms about each other, breathing, as they did everything, in unison.

That deep, quiet, regular breathing was music to Paul's nerves. He tried for a moment to think of the melody that could express it, and

his fingers played dumbly the notes he would strike in daytime. But merely feeling was enough just now.

Through the doorway, which the house-mother always left open as she passed through the last thing at night, Paul could faintly distinguish the outlines of Jessie's white bed and fancy that he saw the pale gold of her braided hair upon the pillow. And from beyond Jessie's little room came the low, sleepy cry of the baby, waking for a moment and falling contentedly asleep again now that the mother had come to rest.

Such a brood of deeply slumbering, healthy, happy, restful souls! Such a sense of quiet companionship! Such a feeling of warmth, of safety, of almost animal comfort in snuggling down under the broad wings of Peace, that brooded over this houseful of humanity!

And all the city's voices were hushed; the fever of down town far, far off; and not a sound without, except the rain's soft, regular, rhythmic tapping against the windows.

In her private car, upholstered in lavender and silver, whose exquisitely carved design was concealed by the masses of roses and brilliant orchids—the last tributes of her compatriots—Pauline Berthier, after playing her farewell performance as even she had never played before, wept and would not be comforted.

And after Paul had fallen asleep, with the lulling consciousness of this home-peace to soothe his racked nerves, Jack Turner was wakened by his sobbing in his slumber—as if in sympathy with the weeping woman borne away by the midnight train on the first stage of her journey abroad.

The recital of her first triumphal progress abroad Pauline Berthier transmitted faithfully to her son. She affected to laugh, at times, at the printed panegyrics that Ricard's secretary sent to Paul, but in her heart the great actress was keenly alive to the slightest hint of disapproval; and the full measure of praise which the Continental critics heaped

upon her made her dizzy with satisfaction.

In those days, when appreciation of her genius was the mark of culture, when the world was at her feet adoring her beauty, her grace, her wonderful charm, she still found time to write fully, simply, lovingly, almost humbly, to the boy separated from her by seas and continents, and living the commonplace life of the children of the middle class.

These years of bourgeois life, the simple sameness of one day to the other, the same regularity of quiet, busy, cheery hours, the companionship of normal, healthy young minds, the systematic direction of his developing tastes and talents, the easy liberty and the wholesome restraint of Mrs. Turner's maternalism—these are what rescued the son of Pauline Berthier from his mother's fate.

When he looked back in after years on this time, Paul could trace, almost step by step, the gradual healing of his prematurely awakened spirit, the slow disciplining which living among others of one's years means, the timid unfolding of his nature now that he was released from the hot-house where Pauline's unbounded love, her tempestuous character, her artificial life, had kept him.

He knew that at first he must have seemed a changeling among them. His fanciful, beautiful, un-American clothes, his serious, overstrained conscientiousness, his unchildlike, nervous suffering, his yearning for the passionate, absorbing love his mother had poured out upon him, his refined, precocious use of words, his artistic instinct—all these separated him, for a time, from the complete enjoyment of the peaceful, simple home life.

His devotion to Jessie—that tenacious ideal which neither the passing of years nor daily, hourly companionship, neither the mockery in her brothers' eyes nor the quiet, sisterly affection in her own, had changed—this love for the little maid grew with his strength. And as a boy he boldly gave voice to the

hope which, when he became a man, he cherished so secretly, so tenderly.

All the rest he lost with the passing of boyhood's slow, long years. It was only the quiet, unwavering passion, becoming less and less expressed as his childhood was left behind him, and his music, growing more and more a part of himself, that distinguished him from the boys of the house. For Mrs. Turner's common sense and dictatorial motherliness had rescued him from the peril of precocious possession of the money that Pauline Berthier bestowed with such lavish hands upon everyone she loved and upon all who loved her.

It was this period that Paul loved to recall long after it was at an end—to strive to feel again that sunny atmosphere of homely well-being; to know once more the exquisite thrill of pride and pleasure his mother's letters from far-off, foreign lands, her beautiful portraits and her generous gifts caused; to be conscious of the glorious unfolding of the genius within him; as a child to stray with dancing feet into the harmonious land of music and feel it to be his own, his native land, his artistic home; and always with the knowledge that, sinking deeper day after day in the garden of his heart, was the rooted love of his life, teaching him patience, granting him strength, sheltering him from loneliness, transforming the past and ennobling the future.

VII

THE curtain had gone down after the second act.

Paul Berthier leaned back in his chair, trembling with pleasure, aglow with pride. She was truly great, his beautiful mother—greater even than his childish memories proclaimed her; greater even than this madly applauding Western audience realized, this audience so ready to second the European verdict, and so proud to welcome this its daughter of genius

home again, after all her years of triumph abroad.

By the time Paul had made his way through the crowd back to her dressing-room she was coming from the stage for the last time after the repeated recalls. Behind her, Wores, the leading man, and her maid came, bearing her flowers.

She was holding up her heavy, stiff, trailing brocaded skirts, and the lace petticoats beneath gleamed white about her pretty ankles. Her golden hair lay damp about her sparkling face, and her white breast, above the low décolleté of her gown, rose and fell with the spent passion of her playing, excitement and pleasure.

She flew into Paul's arms.

"Oh, speak, speak, speak!" she cried, her arms about his neck. "You are satisfied, my Paul—truly, truly satisfied? Ah, say it! Speak, speak!"

"My Pauline!" he murmured. "My beautiful mother, my great mother!"

"A—h!" She drew a long breath of satisfaction. And then she burst into a loud laugh of exultation.

"After all these years," she cried, swaying back and forth in his arms, "and—" she spoke in French now, as was much her habit since her long residence abroad—"and to come back and find my baby, my life, my treasure gone! And thou—art thou really Paul—Paul with the serious eyes, thou, great one, who looks down upon his capricious, naughty little mother from such a height? Ah, my baby, my little conscience, I should never have parted with thee! But thou art pleased, yes? And thou dost love thy Pauline, say? But it was wicked to grow so tall, my baby—mine—mine!"

She laid her glorious head upon his shoulder, closing her eyes and clasping him close, murmuring softly all the while, as if she still held in her arms the child she adored.

It was Ricard who interrupted them. His heavy, coarse black hair had turned quite white since Paul had seen him last.

"Pardon, Pauline," he said, nervously. "The critics have come. It is evidently the fashion out here. They are waiting to congratulate you."

"They will wait! Don't bother me now!"

She lifted her head and, with her arms still about Paul's shoulders, glared like an angry lioness at the manager, the sight of whom seemed to excite her unreasonably.

Ricard shrugged his shoulders.

"The time is short," he said.

She released herself with quick violence.

"Ricard," she cried, turning irascibly upon her old friend, "you will go to those critics. Critics? *Provincials!* Bah!—and you will say to them these words, these very words, with not the slightest change or addition; thus: 'It is not Madame's pleasure to see you, gentlemen!' This you will say," she repeated, her anger mounting with her expression of it, "or I leave the theatre with my son this instant, and to-morrow we separate for good and all."

Paul looked down at her. Now she was herself, her old self—this creature of irresistible sweetness, of perfect grace, of unreasonable whims and uncontrolled passion.

She laid her hand upon Paul's arm, swept into the dressing-room, and banged the door behind them. Then, with a hand that shook with nervous irascibility, she commenced to tear the jewels from her hair.

Suddenly she turned to Paul.

"Well?" she demanded, curtly.

The young man's eyes met those flaming, angry ones for a moment, and then dropped.

"Ho! ho!" she laughed, sneeringly. "Monsieur, the son, disapproves. My word!"

And she laughed like a mad woman.

But suddenly her laughter broke, jangled like the clamor of a broken string on a high-pitched musical instrument, and before he could prevent it she had fallen at his feet, weeping convulsively, her hands clasping his knees, her shining head humbled before him.

"My baby!" she sobbed. "Give me back my little one! I want no great, cold man to stand in judgment over me. I am wicked, yes! I am a fool—a tigress—a devil—yes. But thou art the tigress's cub. Thou art—no, thou wast! But I left thee, and thou—thou hast become a Philistine, who was Prince of Bohemia—and—and thou hast forgotten me! He does not love me any more—he does not love me! My God! my child is no longer my child!"

He looked down in cruel embarrassment at her quivering, white shoulders. Then he stooped and lifted her, with youthful awkwardness but with exceeding tenderness.

"My Pauline," he said, all at once finding again the caressing tone and the soothing words his childish experience with her variable moods had taught him, "see, my Pauline, I am ready to go with you this minute—now—anywhere you wish. Nothing matters but that you should be happy, my Pauline, my beautiful Pauline. Oh, you would not cry if you knew how it hurts me!"

She turned her miserable, tear-stained face up to his. Searchingly she looked into his eyes; suspiciously, with a resentment that was half-defiant confession. But all at once, relieved, the tense lines of her face softened, her lips parted, and she laughed, weakly, but merrily.

"Thou art my baby, my loved one, my own little Paul!" she cried, joyously, putting his hands to her lips. "And thou wilt go with me—anywhere—this minute—yes?"

He nodded.

"Well, then, we two shall go hand in hand, like this, like two naughty children," she said, gaily—"or no, like one naughty child and a great, serious man-child—who disapproves—yes, who disapproves a little, but who loves the wicked one. Say yes!"

"We shall seek out these tiresome critics, eh? They shall see La Berthier—the fortunate ones!—but they shall also see Berthier's son, her great, beautiful boy. What was it that child called you long ago? Oh,

yes! ‘Pretty boy.’ Pretty boy! Pretty! It is an insult—thou young god, with thy mother’s hair and thine own brave, beautiful eyes!

“Wait—wait a moment! My nerves—my nerves! I must have— There, Paul, on the table in Ricard’s room—fill it full— Ah, that’s better. Another! Now come.”

Twice she drained the liquor glass he filled for her, and then, seizing his hand, she whirled with him out of the narrow, dark corridor, coming upon the astonished, offended, solemn-faced critics, just about to return to their chairs in front, with such a rush of swift, gay, mockingly apologetic words, such a profusion of radiant smiles and pretty, graceful, childish airs, such gracious sweetness, such captivating pretense of deference, and such unspoiled, unconventional pleasure in their praise, as turned their critical heads, and made their bored, sober, hackneyed, analytical eyes drunk with the mere sight of her.

VIII

SEATED again in his chair in front, Paul lay back, his unseeing eyes fixed on the stage, his consciousness experiencing again, in all its delicious unrest, in all its nerve-racking, sweet agony, what life with Pauline Berthier meant.

His childhood rose up before him—that anguished, prematurely developed childhood, when his soul was a harp whose sensitive strings moaned and shrieked and sang gloriously under the passionate touch of her ever-mutable moods.

In the memory of this intense experience, his past life, all the quiet years of his later youth, seemed unreal, a slow, long, uneventful dream, in which there were but two realities—his love and his music.

Even his own identity, the Paul of that peaceful, blurred, softened vision, was not himself, he said now, but a dreaming, entranced Paul, whose nerves were cushioned by rest, whose slumbering nature vibrated but slug-

ishly, lacking her maddening yet stirring influence.

But Jessie—and the music . . .

Suddenly he became conscious of the scene on the stage. To his sensitive ear had come a false note that brought his attention back to the present.

She was on the stage again, this radiant, youthful creature who, from the place he occupied, looked like his younger sister, not his mother. She had changed her gorgeous gown, and in the exquisite art of her simple white dress she looked the ideal of girlish loveliness.

Paul stared at the stage bewildered, all his faculties concentrated now upon unraveling the riddle. For there was a riddle about this woman he knew so well and loved so dearly—an elusive mystery, which he seemed ever just on the point of comprehending. There was something strangely, unpleasantly at variance between the youthful purity of her appearance and a subtle, almost intangible, abandon in her manner. At first—against his judgment, against the dictates of his critical taste—he tried to ascribe this to a refinement of her art, which permitted the adventuress she portrayed to appear behind the veil of innocence assumed by *Clorinde*. But if this *Clorinde* was the *Clorinde* of Pauline Berthier’s creation, where was the soul of the woman behind the mask of the adventuress?—where was the renaissance of virginal delicacy, of tender womanliness, springing up again in the shelter of *Monte-Prade*’s home, like a flower whose stalk has been crushed but not broken by the heel of a man’s muddy boot?—where was the awakening love singing in *Clorinde*’s soul like a symphony of pure resolves, of lofty endeavor, of passionate, unavailing, heart-crucifying remorse?

All this the European critics had found in Pauline Berthier’s *Clorinde*. To her son the agonized consciousness came of a wilful, baffling, horrible coarsening of it all. The *Clorinde* of the gutter, the sordid, scheming, revolting *Clorinde*—*Annibal*’s

Clorinde—dressed, too, in the white robe of innocence; a harlot masquera-
ding and defiling the house, the son
of whose master she loved indeed, but
loved as the old *Clorinde* might love
this one to-day, another to-morrow,
and to-morrow—

“Faugh!”

Paul rose with an involuntary ex-
clamation of disgust. He felt that
with sight of her, that with a word
from her, he must read the riddle
aright. But he paused, in his excited
haste, with his hand on the back of
his chair.

“Do not come to her again till the
play’s over,” Ricard had whispered,
just before the curtain rose on the
third act. “She’s so—so overstrung
to-night, and—and she must not be
further excited. Do not come—do
not come, then, my boy, till it’s
over.”

The manager had stood with an arm
on Paul’s shoulder, his haggard eyes
roaming restlessly from the spot where
Pauline Berthier sat sipping her wine
and waiting for her cue, to where her
son stood, his fine head bent to listen.

Paul stood now, quite unconscious of
the presence of the crowded house
and the inquiring glances turned
toward him, as he paused so long, ir-
resolute, in the aisle. He was trying
to analyze the expression of Ricard’s
face as he now remembered it.
Doubt—no, dread, when he looked at
Pauline; and—and when those tired
black eyes were turned on her son—
pity! It was pity, unmistakable pity!

Paul resumed his seat. He would
not go to her now. He would wait—he
knew not for what. He knew only
that something was to come, and that
he must bear it.

It came with *Clorinde*’s scene with
Fabrice toward the end of the fourth
act. This—the Calvary of the sinful,
repentant, high-souled creature—this
Clorinde, shuddering at her past self,
quivering with the agony of her new
birth, seeing the great love of her
better self pass away forever before
her tortured eyes—this *Clorinde* be-
came in Pauline Berthier’s conception
a flippant, hard-mouthed, vile-eyed

woman of the streets; regretting the
exposure, not the sin; regretting the
loss of *Monte-Prade*’s respect only as
the adventuress might regret a lost
opportunity to fleece, to rob, to de-
grade; and with a curious, horrible
insinuation of manner (there was
not a word of *Clorinde*’s part altered,
though the actress’s exquisite, per-
fect enunciation had become careless
and thickened) that stamped her
Annibal’s own sister, fit companion for
the low adventurer, after, as before,
their shameful scheme for plundering
went awry.

Paul was standing at the culmina-
tion, when, deaf to *Fabrice*’s insult-
ing words, she came toward him, her
arms outstretched as if to clasp him
to her. Wores, who played the part,
had his hand upraised as if to strike.
He turned his perplexed face toward
her and half-involuntarily completed
the gesture, hoping to prevent her
approach. He thought the motion
would warn her; he did not realize
how close she was till she staggered
against his outstretched hand, and
fell, and the curtain was hastily rung
down.

If the wildly excited crowd had
not made way, Paul felt that he could
have trampled all obstacles down be-
fore him. Still, with all his haste, it
was long before he reached her dress-
ing-room.

Wores, still in *Fabrice*’s costume,
had just come out, and the door was
immediately latched behind him.

At sight of Paul the actor hesitated,
stifling the angry exclamation on his
lips, and, forgetting his own rage,
stood on guard before Pauline’s door.
Gravely he watched the young man,
letting him come quite close, and then
putting his arm about Paul’s shoul-
ders in the caressing way Wores, of
all men, alone knew.

“My poor boy!” he said.

Paul stared at him. He could not
speak, but he turned to pass into his
mother’s room. Wores barred the
way.

“Don’t go in yet—don’t—I—I beg
of you. She—she’s ill, and—”

Suddenly, interrupting his pleading

words, there came a loud laugh from the dressing-room behind him, a long, hiccoughing laugh without merriment and hysterically prolonged.

Paul brushed Wores aside. He burst the fragile lock of the door and entered.

On a low divan opposite the great three-sided dressing mirror Pauline Berthier half-sat, half-reclined. In one hand she held a lighted cigarette; the other was clasped beneath the head of a white-faced, blond youth, who lay tipsily outstretched, his hat on the back of his head showing the long, straggling, bleached locks falling over his pale, dull eyes.

Paul saw the Bacchanalian tableau three times pictured in the glass before he stood over them.

Pauline Berthier looked up at him, her eyes misty and half-closed, her disheveled head nodding uncertainly, her ripe, red mouth half-open.

"See, Paul," she said, unsteadily, "he—he can't smoke. I light the cigarette—thus. I give it a puff—thus. And I put it into his little mouth—thus—and he—he can't smoke. Do you know, I—I think he—he's drunk. V—very drunk he must be—eh?"

She stopped suddenly, a vague perplexity manifest in her bewildered face.

Despite her intoxication, some consciousness of his agony of shame and rage was borne upon her. So she lay quite quiet, her burning cigarette held politely in her hand; and as if she were an indifferent spectator, she watched Paul seize her young companion and throw him out of the room with such violence that the doors rattled and the thin partitions shook.

By this time the women of the company had hurried in and bent solicitously over her.

Their presence and the burning tip of the cigarette she held awakened her.

"Isn't it funny?" she cried, breaking out in sudden laughter. "Isn't it funny? Such a sit—situation for a c—comedy! The son pro—protecting his m—mother's honor! Wouldn't the F—French go mad over it? Isn't it

funny—isn't it funny? They're never satisfied, these men. F—first they scold because I w—won't see the critics, and then wh—when I'm just as nice as I c—can be to the son of the ch—chief of them! He—he said he was. He t—told me so himself. Oh, isn't it funny!"

She lay back helpless with drunken laughter.

"Get up!"

Paul did not know his own voice, but its suffering significance reached her.

"Cross?" she asked, with a silly frown. "Don't—don't be cross, Paul. D—did you think I was 1—laughing at you? N—no! N—no!"

She got up and stood swaying dizzily before him. "Wouldn't laugh at you. No—no! I—I'm proud of you. I'll d—drink to you. Your—your arm, my son."

With a hideous caricature of her old grace, she placed her hand on his arm to steady herself, and turning to Lollita Lowry, she addressed the ingénue with drunken dignity.

"We—we'll both—we'll all drink to him—he's my son, Berthier's own son. The son of Pauline Berthier! D—did you see how he threw the little white-haired c—cub out bodily, Lollita? Strong? Well, I wonder! G—got a d—devil in him, too, like his mother. L—let's drink to him. Quick! Champagne! Only champagne's g—good enough for m—my Paul. Where—? Bring it, I say," she cried, stamping her foot.

She waited a moment, looking about for the wine, and then, not finding it, her mood suddenly changed. She tore her arm from Paul's and made her way out toward the wings.

"Ricard," she cried, without waiting to see whether the manager was within hearing, "give me that bottle! How dare you—how dare you! I will drink—I will. You wretch, do you think I care for your vile play, or the whole stupid company, or the canaille out in front? I hate them—I hate them! Think of the years I've worked to amuse them—the dunces! I must work while they sit and smile lan-

guidly, and are pleased to applaud a little now and then! Bah! Let me out! Let me tell them the truth once!"

Ricard had just bowed himself from the stage, where, before the curtain, he had expressed, with suavity and wonderfully repressed rage, his regret, his deep regret, at this unfortunate beginning of their American engagement, his unbounded sorrow for the disappointment of so brilliant and appreciative an audience.

Madame Berthier, he said, growing more assured with the effect of his grandest manner upon the audience, was unconscious just now. But the physicians had assured him that, with care, she would recover.

"In her devotion to her art—" the artist-manager's voice was gravely, thrillingly sweet—"and in her great desire to please her countrymen and countrywomen—the very source of her genius—Madame Berthier has appeared to-night despite the commands of her physicians, who had administered a strong drug, hoping to allay her intense nervous excitement. But unfortunately—" Ricard's haggard, dark eyes swept the upturned, curious faces now, and smiled upon them, so sure he was that he had won them—"unfortunately, the powerful drug has had a contrary effect upon so high-keyed and artistic a nervous organism, and, my friends," he concluded, with the frankest, saddest smile, "you have seen Pauline Berthier playing as a sort of somnambulist—a drug-maddened, over-excited somnambulist—the part we hope before long to present to you as only Berthier can play it.

"For your inexpressibly kind forbearance to-night I cannot thank you. Berthier alone, with the utmost perfection of her art, must repay you."

When he stepped back into the darkened wings, accompanied by the friendly applause his excellent acting deserved, Ricard's eyes were so dazzled by the change from the brilliantly lighted stage that he did not see Pauline until she clutched his arm.

"Don't you ever dare!" she cried,

her voice hoarse with rage and drink, "to take anything—anything from my room. I will drink—you c—can't prevent it—you can't! You—you will give it to me now—now—this minute, or I'll go out on the st—stage as—as I am, and show them for once wh—what I think, and h—how much I care for—"

Ricard raised his arm. He wanted to strike her, to beat her into silence. But she slipped just under his clenched fist, and stood, below the lighting apparatus, so far out that the occupants of the left-hand upper boxes could see her.

"Now—" she turned her passionate, glowing face to him for a last respite, "will you give it?"

"Yes—yes," he answered. "Come back."

"No," she chuckled, cunningly. "Here I stay t—till—"

"All right," he whispered, "but don't go any further."

"N—not unless you m—make me," she stammered; "and don't wait t—till they're gone, either, you shrewd old rascal!"

The wine was handed to him, and Ricard was just about to fill a glass when Paul appeared. Without a word he took the bottle from the old man's hand and took his place beneath the lights, where Pauline Berthier stood.

"See," he said to his mother, his hushed, tense voice audible only to her, "I fill it—fill it full—see!" The golden drops bubbled over the side of the glass and stained her trailing gown. "Now drink—drink, Pauline, and when you have drained the last drop, both of us will die."

With one hand he held the dripping glass toward her. With the other he raised a knife, its handle set with rubies, which he had caught up in his frenzy from her dressing table.

It had been given her by an Indian Prince visiting London, who would have melted down every drop of the blood of his myriad subjects into a single ruby—could that have been done—to please this most exquisite creature he had found in the Western world.

Pauline Berthier took the glass from Paul's hand and raised it to her lips, looking at him the while with a puzzled, unbelieving frown.

His eyes met hers almost encouragingly.

Oh, if she would drink, he prayed, that he might indeed plunge this blade into her heart and then into his own, and so still forever the bursting agony that festered there!

But suddenly she staggered, her hand shook, and the glass smashed in fragments on the floor. She looked at him with almost sober comprehension in her wide-open, moist eyes, and then, with a moan like that of a hurt animal, she fell unconscious at his feet.

IX

With his arms outstretched upon the open piano, his head bowed in anguish, Paul sat alone in the dusk in Pauline Berthier's luxurious boudoir.

He could not play. He could not think. The sound of a note, which he had struck inadvertently, made him shiver with apprehension. He was afraid of his own emotion, should he once yield to it. And to play now would be to express it all in music, to release the dammed-up bitter waters that filled him with misery.

Still the touch of the beloved instrument was like leaning upon some dumb but sentient thing that pitied, and, in a measure, comforted. And so he sat quiet, resting from the active agony that was now over.

All at once he felt a gentle touch on his arm.

Paul started—he almost felt repulsion. He thought it was his mother.

But before the frank, innocent eyes that met his, the open, slightly embarrassed face and the slender, girlish hand outstretched, he trembled with relief, with a surprised, welcoming pleasure that assured him he might still experience happiness.

"Oh, Jessie, Jessie," he cried, holding her hand in both his own, "how

good of you—how unspeakably good of you!"

"Is she very, very ill?" the girl whispered.

"No." The innocent inquiry brought it all back with a rush. "No, she is better—now."

"Well, you—why, then—what is it, Paul, that troubles you so? Oh, it looked so sad to see you sitting here alone! Is it because she could not do herself justice when she was so ill?"

He shook his head, his shamed eyes falling before the shining, frank sympathy in hers.

"What then?" she asked. "You will tell me, won't you?" She laid her hand pleadingly on his shoulder and bent tenderly toward him. "I might be able, you know," she said, with the schoolgirl's bright self-confidence, "to help you this time, too."

"Oh, you have," he said, with warm gratitude. "This time, and always, you help me. The sight of you, dear, and your voice—your own, gentle, familiar voice!"

"And you will tell me?"

"Yes," he said, softly. "I'll tell you, I'll tell you, Jessie. Not now—but some day, please God, some day, my sweet girl, I'll tell you this—and one thing besides—Jessie!"

She bent suddenly to pick her books from the floor.

"I must go," she said, playing with the strap in pretty, childish embarrassment. "The boys wanted to come, but I coaxed mother, and she said I might drop in for just a moment to inquire about Madame Berthier."

He caught up his hat boyishly, and taking her books from her, he said:

"I'll take you to the car, Jessie-girl. Oh, yes, let me! No, she will not miss me. Just to the car, Miss Turner, and I'll be back right away."

He left the room with her, all the buoyancy of happy youth expressed in his strong young figure and adoring face.

When he came back Pauline Berthier was sitting in a low chair before the fire, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes closed wearily, her upturned, haggard face wan and old, her limbs

lying inert and spiritless, the white lace gown clinging close about her.

In his imagination Paul had lived through this meeting many, many times. Always during these days, while she had lain in the bedroom yonder—mad with drink, humiliated and despairing at conscious intervals, or half-dazed with physical exhaustion—he had gone over and over again in his mind through this interview, in the pitiful belief that by trying to anticipate her suffering and his he might lessen both.

He thought he was prepared. All the day and every troubled instant when he awoke from the dreams that continually reproduced the nightmare of that terrible night, he had tried to plan and to work out a possible solution.

Death for himself and for her, which that night had seemed so simple, so easy, so logical, looked now, in the light of day, garish, melodramatic—and impossible when he considered the love of life that animated Pauline Berthier's beautiful body.

Atonement—rehabilitation! And then, his girl mother in all the unlicensed passion of her youth appeared before his mental vision—throwing herself into the arms of the man whose son he was, but whose name neither he nor she might bear; and in the same degree of passion—impatient wrath now instead of impatient love—throwing the missile, with all the force of her tempestuous, ardent nature, that might have killed the child she loved.

At times, during these days of waiting, he had hated her for her weakness, her self-indulgence, and the bestial selfishness that would sacrifice her old companions, her reputation, her very life, to that uncontrolled desire. He had hated her for the shame he felt. He had vowed, in a mad moment of self-torturing rage, to require at her hands complete abdication of self-government. And then, like a torrent, the memory of her love for him overflowed the hot, dry passion in his heart, and the exquisite pain he felt had nothing of self-pity;

only deep compassion for the sinner, and regret, regret, ceaseless regret, for the fall to which so great, so beautiful, so lovable a being might be doomed.

And now the sight of her lying before him, so weak, so hopelessly inert, like the dead reflection of her vivid, buoyant self, clutched him by the throat. He forgot all he had thought or planned or imagined, and with an inarticulate cry he ran to her, and kneeling before her, buried his head in her lap, like a child, weeping as he had not wept since the night they separated, years, years ago.

She let him sob the storm of his grief away, only laying now and then one beautiful long hand upon his crisp, thick hair, with an infinitely gentle, tender touch.

In her utter exhaustion, the reaction from her own violent remorse and self-disgust, she was strong now, and could lie passive but hopelessly humble, feeling the full tide of his weakness, but too weary, too despairing, to let it bear her away from the dreary calm she had found.

The morning brought physical strength to Pauline, and with that strength came, in some degree, the mental buoyancy, the ever fresh interest in life, the vivacious charm and glow which characterized her nature. Not that she dropped wholly the black remorse of her mourning over the death of her finer self, but that, being stronger now, she unconsciously discovered that the purples and lavenders were more becoming to her elastic health and changeable temperament.

Paul had slept the first peaceful sleep since this shadow had fallen upon him.

He woke refreshed, quietly hopeful, his mother's words, as they parted the night before, singing a sad yet soothing lullaby to his fears.

"You will help me, Paul. You will be my savior. See, I was wrong to leave you here—to live all these years away from my little conscience."

The first smile he had seen on her

lips since that night flickered trembly and went out.

"You are strong, my poor darling. I shall lean upon you. You will strengthen me, and in time, when I have atoned, you will forgive me. Hush! hush! I know. But oh, my boy, my baby, if you knew! Never mind—never mind. Your presence will soothe me, your love will uphold me, and the thought of your disgust and shame will stand, like an angel with a flaming sword, between me and—and destruction.

"Surely that will keep me from it? It will! It must!

"We will go away together for a little—just we two—yes, my Paul? And then, when my nerves are strong again, we will leave the memory of all this behind. We will go abroad, and there—there you shall realize your mother's greatness—and her recovery. I promise you, by my love for you, I will resist."

She believed it when she said it; the drunkard is as hopeful as the consumptive. And Paul believed it, too; those who love the sufferer most believe most readily that the malady is not mortal.

X

AT first the letters that Paul wrote from Paris to his foster-family were gay with the moral convalescence of his beloved invalid; gay with his boyish delight in the novelty of the free, bright world, where, as Pauline Berthier's son, full, free admission was his birthright; gay with the artist's joy when under propitious skies he feels the divine gift stir and grow within him.

These letters were addressed to his foster-mother. But they were written to Jessie. All that he could gather from the brilliant web that Paris weaves for her own and the world's amusement was unconsciously refined and purified that it might be fit for this schoolgirl's eyes. All that he did, all that he hoped to do, was exalted and ennobled in that it became a rung in the golden ladder whose top, encom-

passed by vague, rosy clouds, rested upon the ledge of the window of this maiden's heart. He never spoke to her directly, but the revelation of his strong, loyal nature, of his almost fatherly devotion to his mother, of the nobility of the man's and the artist's soul, wooed the girl subtly, gently, irresistibly.

Then came a period when the letters ceased; then they recommenced, and then ceased once more. When he wrote again, after a long interval, all the gaiety, all the boyish interest, all the manly hope in the future, was gone. Behind the reticent, simple phrases there was a wistful, sober longing for the peace he had known among them; and the girl, who had learned to read their tone, repeated their words to herself softly that night, and wept, vaguely troubled, miserably sympathetic, she knew not why.

Once Paul wrote to Jessie. It was at the close of a brilliant London season, when the light of Pauline Berthier's genius flamed up grandly, and at parting the great actress was banqueted by the allied artists of the city.

"See, my loved one," she had said gaily, laying her soft, perfumed cheek against his, "you shall trust your penitent this once. You will send me there alone, and I shall think always of my grave-eyed confessor here at his piano, improvising the melodies that the world shall sing long after Berthier and her art have been forgotten. Truly I am jealous of you—no, no, my beloved, I glory in you, my baby, my sweetheart, my savior!"

And she had swept out in her beautiful dinner gown, radiant with the full-blown loveliness that was still hers, leaving him with a light kiss and a whispered promise: "*Je serai bien sage.*"

He sat at the piano long, looking dreamily after her, his hands lying idle upon the keys. Then with a light upon his face that was almost childlike, he went to his desk and wrote his first love letter.

It was finished long before Pauline Berthier returned. But he sat there with the sheets open before him, touching them caressingly, re-reading them with a longing desire to know how they would sound to the gentle girl whose boyish lover he had been since they two first met.

This he might know, in part, when his mother should return. For she should read the letter, he had decided, before it was sent. He owed her this, he said to himself, for hope in her future, now, after many cruel disillusionments, had made hope possible for him.

But the letter was never sent. Pauline Berthier had gone to the banquet given in her honor, joyous with the consciousness of her beauty, serene in the pride of her genius. She had left him a goddess. She came back a pitiable, staggering, stuttering slave to the fierce passion that had burst all bounds now, and demanded indemnity for its long repression.

In the morning Paul laid the letter on the glowing coals in the grate, where the fire had burned all night, and watched it till there was nothing but a trembling black shell left. Then he went with his mother to a sanitarium in the country.

He never left her after this, though in time his influence over her waned, and he could only share, not avert, her disgrace.

He was with her in Brussels when she quarreled the last time with Ricard, and the old manager, pressing Paul's hand with truest affection at parting, begged him not to forget that there was one friend who could not tire. He was with her when, seized again by that smoldering hatred for her audiences, which drink fanned

into flame, she scandalized Berlin by interpolating a wicked French chansonette in *Magda's* part. He was with her when, before a great audience at Lyons, she forgot her lines and was hissed from the stage. He was with her when, in a suicidal agony of sudden remorse, she jumped overboard from a transatlantic steamer before he could prevent it, but hardly a second before he followed and rescued her. He was with her in that disastrous tour through India and Australia, when vast audiences came to see the artist whose renown had long preceded her, and went away reviling or pitying the woman whose genius was being sapped by her licentious intemperance. He was with her—dragged by his horrified, pitying love for her—through all the vile scandals the whole world knows, bearing, too, the nauseating repetition of them in the newspapers, which, because of her reputation, made them prominent.

In time, though, the greatness of the tragedy whose agonized witness he was blotted out all lesser considerations. Her old love for him was gone. Its awakening from time to time meant only increased suffering for both. But his love for her never wavered. She grew to look upon him as a master and to try to escape from him as from a jailer. He learned to think of her as a weak-minded child, irritable, exacting, or painfully repentant; a child that might at any time become a devil of malevolence, of deceit, of pagan impropriety, or—worse, returning to sane self-consciousness, a creature tortured and torturing in her self-flagellating, self-murdering remorse.



HER POINTED VIEW

CHAPPIE (*blasé*)—Don't you think society is an empty thing?
Miss FULLER—I think there are lots of empty things in society.

THE PASSING OF TRAGEDY

By Bliss Carman

WHAT form goes there,
 Across the square?
I know it without coaching,
That doleful mien.
The Tragic Queen!
 Oh, heaven! she is approaching.

That stalking tread,
That bridled head,
 Those eyes so mad, yet steady!
Hide, hide, Pierrette!
We'll fool her yet—
 She knows too much already.

“She ought to be
In custody.”
 (She ought to be in Hades!)
“Or far away
In Mandalay,
 In some Home for Old Ladies.”

Once safe and sound
And outward bound
 Upon the wide Atlantic,
One handkerchief
Would hold my grief.
 Her presence drives me frantic.

Quick, Pierrette, quick!
And let her stick
 Her card beneath the door.
For, once inside—
Ah, she would hide
 Her enmity no more.

O shape of fear,
Approach not near
 My unassuming doorway!
You have no right
In here to-night;
 Some alley-way is your way.

Old Tragic Muse,
I hate your views
 Of love and wine and woman.
But Comedy
Shall play with me
 As long as hearts are human.

Away, avaunt,
Misfortune's aunt!
 Seek younger loves than mine.
I have a date
To dine at eight
 With Comedy and wine.

There, love, at last
The shadow's past.
 Thank God, we shall escape her!
Now, never mind,
Pull down the blind,
 And light the festal taper!



WITH BLACK COFFEE

THE rubber plant is gradually getting to be accepted as America's national flower.

After dinner cheese wouldn't be half so bad if it wasn't for the dog biscuit always brought with it.

Most men propose nowadays with one hand thrust carelessly into the trousers pocket so they may seem perfectly unconcerned.

Chafing-dish cookery is never so interesting as when people disagree with you and you own the dish.

A baby doesn't know what real trouble is until posed before a camera without any clothes on.

A girl knows the Summer is really over when she goes to a matinée and has had blue-points on the half-shell.

The prettier a negligée gown is the more a woman will apologize for it.

A modern woman thinks it is perfectly fascinating to buy a chicken at the bargain counter of the food department of a dry-goods store and get it with her change through a chute.

You'll notice that a girl who wears a 2A shoe can never keep the laces tied.

DOUGLAS DUNNE.



A WAY OUT OF IT

MR. B'GOODE—Do you think you'd make a good minister's wife?

MISS DEBRIGHT—I'm not positive. If I don't, you know you might try some other profession.

AN UNFINISHED ELOPEMENT

By Caroline K. Duer

"I SUPPOSE you call this 'life!'" cried Beatrice, entering the house in a whirl of passion and petticoats. "Spending a whole afternoon in driving here and there, and leaving little cards at people's doors—" here she cast her parasol and card-case upon the floor, and the butler picked them up quite as if he were accustomed to it. "What is the good of it all, I ask you? Who's any the better for it? Certainly I am not."

"You don't seem much the better for it just now," said her friend, following her stormy progress through the drawing-room and out on to the enclosed piazza, "but you will be when you reflect that it's not waiting to be done to-morrow."

"That's just it. There's always something of that kind to be done tomorrow if it's not done to-day. What does it all amount to? It's so small, and petty, and trifling! If I thought I were going to lead the same life and see the same people and do the same little things for the next twenty years I should go mad. Tea, please, Thompson, here on the piazza, and ask 'Toinette if she has any of the cakes I like. I don't know the name, but she will know if you say the cakes Mrs. Seaton likes. Poor Thompson! He looks bad, doesn't he? I wonder if we keep him up too late at night! How ridiculous it is to sit up late boring one's self when one might be reading something delightful or improving one's mind—not that I have any mind, I don't mean that, but—"

"I suppose Thompson has, and you are afraid that it will deteriorate while he is in your service."

"Well, I really think it might, you

know," said Beatrice, whimsically. "We don't set him much of an example; always amusing ourselves all day long, and never doing anything for anybody."

"But I thought you said you were not amused."

"I'm not. Jack really likes these people, but I can't get on with them. And I generally have to sit between the two stupidest men at the table. The other night, at that big dinner you made me go to, I had old Mr. Pipkin on one side and Mr. Simperton on the other. Mr. Pipkin told me nine different ways of preparing prawns, one of them the favorite way of the Prince of Wales, and Mr. Simperton talked of nothing but the women's dresses, and which women were rouged. I wished I had been rouged myself, I was so white with fatigue."

"You didn't look very happy," said Catherine, laughing.

"I suppose if there had been interesting people there they would not have wanted to talk to me," went on Beatrice, reflectively. "I've got no conversation. But it does seem as if the usual kind might find something better than the weather, and golf, and bridge, and what people have on, and whether they do things they oughtn't or not. I don't care. I wish they would, if it makes them happy. I dare say I'd do them, too, I feel so wicked in my heart sometimes, only nobody would want to play with me, because I am so unattractive. Don't say anything. I don't want to be contradicted. I hate compliments, and I hate looking like myself, too." Here she made a grimace indicative of great

personal disapproval, and began to take off her hat. "Is my hair wild? You would tell me, wouldn't you? It's foolish to care, but one likes to be neat. Well, I'm not going up stairs to arrange it if it isn't. Dear little Catherine, your hair always looks so nice, and you are so good, aren't you?"

"I am a little more patient with Providence and people, if you mean that."

"I should think you were," said Beatrice. "I watched you on that awful occasion, and you were talking away so politely. I thought I should scream and kick the table over when we were only at soup, and I said to myself: 'Now I'll just count three, and then I'll see what I'll do.'"

"And what did you do? I observed no commotion."

"Well, I made up my mind to behave myself by the time I got to three, but I sha'n't always. Some day I shall do something dreadful. You'll see! Why, it's perfectly ridiculous to expect a person to be contented with a life like this. Oh, I know I've got a great deal to be thankful for. I've got a *husband* and a *home*! Whenever I complain everybody always says I've got a charming husband and a delightful house; and so I have. Jack's a great deal nicer than I am, I know, and the house keeps out the rain, now that we've put a new roof on it. But you can't be madly exhilarated because you are protected from the weather and your husband does not beat you, can you?"

"I suppose some people might be," began Catherine, cautiously.

"Oh, I know. The poor creatures who are wretched and unhappy. I am wicked to complain about trifles, when so many people have real sorrows. You don't know how awful I feel sometimes about having things —nice things and comfortable things—when I don't deserve them at all. I should like to give them away to those who need them more. I should, really. And it wouldn't be much of a sacrifice, either, for I don't think things mean much to me. Of course

I've never been without them, so I don't know. But some women care so much for detail. Now, I don't care a bit, and I hate domestic questions about the servants and the horses and the cooking. What does it matter? I'd rather go out and scrub by the day than talk about it."

"I'm afraid I like contriving and arranging things. But so would you if you felt that other people's comfort depended upon your doing it," suggested Catherine, with amiable intention.

"That's just it. People do depend on you. Nobody depends on me. If they did, I think I'd be good. But everyone does things so much better than I do them. Why, I can't even take care of Jack when he's ill. I don't like men to be ill, ever, you know, and I go to the door and say: 'Don't you think you are a great deal better now? Oh, you must be!' And when he says he isn't, it makes me furious. The last time he was ill in town we had asked some people to dine and go to the theatre, and just after dinner I dashed up stairs and knocked at his door suddenly to ask how he was, and waked him out of a sound sleep. Then I was sorry, and wanted to know if there wasn't something I could do for him, and he said he'd like a drink of water, so I took up the siphon, and the vichy flew all over everything. The room was deluged and so was Jack, and I was so disgusted with myself that I said: 'There! you see what a fool I am; I can't even give a person a glass of water. You ought never to have married me!' And I rushed away down stairs, leaving the door open, and poor Jack had to ring and ring for ages for someone to come and shut it."

"I'm afraid Jack has his own trials," said Catherine, laughing.

Beatrice turned round in her chair with a sudden movement that made all the tea things rattle.

"Oh! you don't think I am disagreeable to live with, do you?" she asked, much troubled. "I'm not nagging or troublesome about little

things, am I? I don't want to be small. I know I've got a bad temper. I always have had, and I do show it, but it doesn't last long. I was saying to Jack only the other day that I had not thrown anything at him for ever so long. Isn't it so, Jack?" as her husband entered the room. "I haven't been in a passion for months and months, have I? And I do amuse you, don't I? I know I am funny even when I am angry. You don't think I'm not nice to live with, Catherine?"

"I think you are charming, even when you are in your worst tempers," returned her friend, and Mr. Seaton added, in his quiet way:

"You see my life is diversified, Miss Blair. Sometimes sunshiny and sometimes stormy, but never dull."

"I don't think you are very nice to me, Jack," said his wife. "Will you have some tea? You had better not, because you'll be horrid if you grow fat."

Mr. Seaton, who was perhaps rather broad shouldered for his height, but in no immediate danger of the awful fate pointed out to him, smiled as if he had heard the remark before, and sighed as if he knew he should often hear it again, and sitting down, began to open some letters that he had found on the table as he passed through the hall.

Everything was quiet except for the faint rustling of the papers.

Beatrice leaned her long, slim, rose-bemuslined figure back in her white wicker chair and looked out at the ocean and the sunset. The sky was all gray and gold and flame, and the gulls were wheeling above the rocks. Every now and then the wind would carry a little breath of salt and seaweed from the beach below to the cliffs above.

Beatrice thought of how restless she was and how peaceful she wanted to be; how her life was made up of little efforts for little ends; of how much she wanted to do things that were worth while, things that were noble, things that would help other people. If only Jack understood! Then she looked at Jack. She wondered why

he had married her. She honestly thought her brilliant, black-lashed eyes, peach-tinted skin and charming, irregular features absolutely ugly, and was fond of shaking her fist at her reflection in the glass and calling herself "you hideous young woman!" Neither had she much respect for her mental powers, and as for her character—she varied between thinking herself the most misunderstood and the least worth understanding person of her acquaintance. As for Jack, she was of opinion that he took this life much too easily. She would have liked him to be seriously interested and ambitious, if not for himself, at least to help in the work of the world. There must be something one could do, thought Beatrice.

Jack thought how comfortable a well-stuffed armchair seemed after a morning on the golf links and an afternoon in the saddle, what a good thing exercise was, and how well a man felt after a day spent in the open air. He was contented, healthy, happy, and pleasantly tired. What more did anyone want? Life was easy, and fitted him like a well-worn glove. Beatrice's restless dissatisfaction was incomprehensible to him, but it was part of Beatrice, and therefore to be borne. He admired her very much, and what he did not understand he criticised as little as possible. In a word, he was a philosopher, except when he was goaded into the position of a patient man. He glanced at his wife and thought how wistful she looked, and then he wondered how she would take the news contained in the letter he had just opened. His aunt, Mrs. Wilhelmina Webster, announced that she meant to come and spend a fortnight with them "[if convenient]" in brackets. Jack guiltily remembered that he was going off on a cruise with a friend.

Catherine thought of the "little more" it takes to make everybody happy and the "little less" with which most have to manage, and of the person who loved her best and was far enough away at the moment.

The gold and flame faded out of the sky, and the servant came in to take away the tea things.

Mr. Seaton stretched himself with a mighty stretch, and Catherine wondered what time it was.

"There's a clock at your elbow, but it doesn't often go," said Beatrice, coming back from the clouds. "Why do you care what time it is? It's so beautiful! You can't want to go and dress yet."

"Here's a letter I'd like you to read, Beatrice," said her husband, putting the envelope on the table beside her.

"Oh! not now, Jack. I know it's something horrid. The handwriting looks dreadfully familiar. I'm sure it's from some of your family, saying that I 'ought' to be or do something that I *won't* be or do. Don't make me read it, please."

She brushed the letter with her elbow, and it fell to the floor.

Jack picked it up with perfect politeness and put it into his pocket.

"I'm very sorry, my dear," he said. "I'm afraid you won't like it, but Aunt Wilhelmina wants to come here on Thursday for a fortnight."

"Like it!" cried Beatrice, with a wail of despair. "I think it's the very horridest thing that could have happened. Oh, Jack, this is awful! And I thought I should enjoy myself so much while you were away! Well, I shall just write and say that I have a bad case of scarlet fever."

"I'm afraid she'd only come the faster for that. She rather fancies herself as a nurse."

"Well, then, think of some other excuse, quickly," cried his wife, stamping with impatience. "I won't have her. Do you think I must have her, Jack? Say you don't. She's so straight-laced and stiff that it makes me bad just to look at her. Can't we write and tell her not to come? I suppose you'll say we can't. *You* are well out of it, at any rate. Oh, why do I always have to do things that I hate?" lamented Beatrice, with tears in her voice.

Jack looked troubled and a little irritated.

"I'm awfully sorry that you should be imposed on, my dear," he said, "but it is partly your own fault. You asked her yourself when she was in town last Winter."

"But she said she was going abroad then," returned his wife, much aggrieved. "I never dreamed she'd come—" Then, as she saw he was really distressed—"But never mind, Jack, I'll be good. Poor old lady! There aren't many people to whom I can give pleasure, and I ought to be glad that she wants to come. But Catherine has got to stay on with me. You must, Catherine. Nobody can want you as much as I do. She must, mustn't she, Jack? You can't expect me to support Aunt Wilhelmina alone."

The day of that lady's visitation was marked by a sweeping rain-storm, in the midst of which she arrived—a tall, supercilious old woman in black, who looked down her nose at people. Beatrice had sent the carriage, but when Mrs. Webster found it unattended save by the coachman who drove it and the footman who sought her out, she dismissed it at once, remarking aloud that she did not accept the "loan" of people's carriages. Either they came for her themselves or she took a cab. And a cab she took, and appeared, with her two modest trunks on the top of it, some fifteen minutes after the return of her niece-in-law's discarded vehicle.

"I'm so sorry you did not use the carriage," said Beatrice, meeting her at the front door.

"I prefer to be independent, my dear," returned Mrs. Webster, presenting a chilly cheek to be kissed. "For which reason I should be glad if you would permit my cabman to carry up my trunks. He is already paid with that express understanding."

Beatrice gasped and led the way into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Webster followed her. Catherine was introduced, and asked, for want

of something better to say, whether the journey had been tiresome. It seemed an unfortunate speech.

"I suppose all journeys are tiresome to unobservant young people," remarked Aunt Wilhelmina. "Where is Jack, my dear Beatrice?"

Beatrice explained that Jack had gone out to see a man about a polo pony, but that he would certainly be back for luncheon.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Webster, with a soundless sniff. "In my youthful days young men did not treat the visit of a relative so cavalierly."

"Jack was exceedingly sorry to be obliged to go out this morning," went on Beatrice, rolling horrified eyes in her friend's direction, "and he feels dreadful that he is going to miss the greater part of your visit, but he promised long ago to go off on the yacht with this friend of his, and he can't very well get out of it. Promises were rather binding even in your time, Aunt Wilhelmina. I remember you told me so when I was first engaged to Jack."

"If you profited by all the advice given you on that occasion you must be an excellent wife by this time, my dear Beatrice," returned her aunt, impenetrably. "I am sorry Jack is to be away during my visit, but perhaps my being with you makes his mind easier."

"Easier about his going?" said Mrs. Seaton. "Well, perhaps in one way it does, Aunt Wilhelmina. But we both go our own way, you know. Sometimes we hardly see each other for weeks." She watched with delight the gradual stiffening of Mrs. Webster's face. "We never like the same things nor the same places. You know how it is with married people. I dare say you and Mr. Webster felt just the same. Let me show you your room, Aunt Wilhelmina; you look quite tired," suddenly.

Catherine, choking with suppressed laughter, followed them up stairs and took refuge in her own room.

After a short absence Mrs. Seaton returned and threw herself into a

chair with the air of one who has abandoned hope.

"Well, Jack," she said, addressing her husband, who had just come in, "your aunt is here. And do you know, I think she must have been offended that neither of us went to meet her, for she sent the carriage away and came up in a cab."

"Did she?" returned Mr. Seaton, abstractedly. "That's too bad. Do you know, Beatrice, the storm has blown down half of one of the chimneys on the south side of the house?"

"Oh, never mind; you can put up a new one, and we'll break a bottle of champagne down it and christen it after Aunt Wilhelmina," said Beatrice, whose indifference to things domestic was perfectly unfeigned.

"We don't need chimneys until the Autumn, and we shouldn't need them then if I had my way, because we shouldn't be here late enough. How glad I always am to get back to town! But what I wanted to say, Jack, was that you'll have to be awfully nice and sweet to your aunt to-night. It won't be very gay for her otherwise, for Catherine dines out and I've got to leave you directly after dinner. Do you think she will mind?"

"Where are you going? Oh, Thursday! It's that ridiculous Boys' Club, of course. Can't you give it up to-night?"

"I suppose it does seem ridiculous to you, and I know I'm not much good at such things. Catherine, who's only been once, has ever so much more influence than I have. But I've begun it now, and I hate to stop, and one evening a week isn't much to give up to it. It's ever so much more amusing than going out to dinner and sitting between two horrid old men who talk to you about food and women's dress. Dear Jack," patting him on the shoulder, "do be nice about it, and make it all right with your aunt. You can think it just as ridiculous as you please. I often think things you do ridiculous! I must go to-night, because I promised to stop for Mrs. Vandermark. She's going to take her banjo and play for

them. And Grifforth Chandos is going to talk to them. I'm sorry it's your last night at home, but you and Aunt Wilhelmina can have a nice, cozy gossip after dinner," concluded Beatrice, sparkling all over with sudden mischief. "I'll leave my special brand of cigarettes out for her."

Fortunately a boys' club presented itself in a perfectly seemly and becoming way to Mrs. Webster's mental eyes. She regretted her niece's absence, but approved the occasion for it. Anything one could do to improve the condition of the poor should be done.

"But we're only trying to amuse them a little," cried Mrs. Seaton, over her shoulder, as she stepped into the carriage. "Good-night; don't keep your aunt up too late, Jack."

But apparently both Mrs. Webster and her nephew had been of one mind in regard to the advisability of an early separation, for when Miss Blair returned from her dinner-party at the comparatively early hour of half-past ten, the drawing-room was entirely deserted, and it was not until some time after she had gone up stairs that she heard the voices of her host and hostess, who appeared to have returned to the house together.

Beatrice came into her room next morning almost as soon as the breakfast tray, in a long pink dressing-gown and with very large, sleepy eyes.

"Well, my dear," she said, "Jack's gone. He just knocked at the door and said good-bye to me. It was the seventh knock this morning. Aunt Wilhelmina sent long before eight to know at what time I would breakfast. So I wrote her a little note and said I'd had mine long ago, but I hoped she'd be as lazy as she pleased. Won't she be furious! Jack's rather furious with me, too. You see, she went to bed early last night, and he thought he'd come down to the Boys' Club for me, and I didn't know it; so when they told me the carriage was there I said it could wait. I was having such an interesting time! Grifforth Chandos had brought a friend with him, a

man from the West—one of the big, broad-shouldered, direct-looking young men that Gibson draws—and he was talking to us about the characteristic differences between Western boys and Eastern boys and what training was best for each—not to me, particularly; he wasn't introduced to me—but I was listening. It was very interesting."

"And all the time, I suppose, Jack was waiting."

"Yes. Wasn't it dreadful? But it wasn't my fault, was it? And it really was funny, Catherine, only he wasn't able to see that side of it last night. After about half an hour he sent in to say that Mr. Seaton was in the carriage. I thought, you know, that it had picked him up somewhere—at least, I don't know what I thought, I was so busy listening—so I just said, 'Well, let it take Mr. Seaton home and come back for me.' So you see by the time I did come Jack wasn't pleased, naturally, and I cried all the way home because I said he was so cross to me."

"What had he said?" inquired Catherine, sympathetically.

"Nothing at all," said Beatrice; "that was just the trouble."

Catherine laughed, and Beatrice smiled a little.

"Poor Jack, he is good to me," she said. "I told him this morning I'd forgive him if he'd say he was sorry. So he said he was, and then I said I was, and would be good while he was away. Get up, Catherine, and let us take Aunt Wilhelmina to the beach to see all the smart bathing dresses. I'm sure they didn't wear such costumes in her youthful days."

Mrs. Webster was in the drawing-room reading the morning paper, her back very stiff, her head very erect, and her eye-glasses so far down her nose that they appeared to clip her very nostrils. Beatrice was very sweet with her, apologized for the lateness of her own appearance, and hoped everything had been done for her aunt's comfort. Full particulars of Jack's departure were given and a short dissertation upon the duty of

wives listened to with a demureness beautiful to see.

"Did you ever know anybody as good as I am?" she whispered to Catherine, as Mrs. Webster, having agreed to go out with them, swept from the room to put on her bonnet and mantle. "Poor old lady, if I can't enjoy her visit, it seems hard that she should not. I hope she does, but I shall be glad when it's over."

As they drove along Aunt Wilhelmina had a great deal to say about the vulgarity and ostentation of modern times. The houses were too big, the women too expensively dressed, the automobiles went too fast. Elegance, simplicity, refinement, and that being known as a "great lady" were so entirely the products of her own generation that it was doubtful if Beatrice could even form an idea of what society must have been in the days when they flourished.

Beatrice mildly submitted that she didn't find society very interesting at present.

"Catherine says I'm getting morbid about it," she said. "And perhaps I am. I suppose I'd like it well enough if I were awfully admired or if there were some particular person whom I cared to meet!"

"My dear Beatrice!" exclaimed Mrs. Webster, as the carriage drew up, "a young married woman——"

"Oh, I know, Aunt Wilhelmina, it's very wicked to talk like that, and I oughtn't ever to want to speak to anyone but Jack, as you never wanted to speak to anyone but Mr. Webster. I'm sure you never had a taste that your husband couldn't share, nor wanted to know about anything that he couldn't tell you. I'm afraid I'm not like that, and I'm so naughty that I don't care."

With which revolutionary sentiment she guided indignant Mrs. Webster's reluctant feet down the steps to the green-roofed pavilion, from which many gaily dressed people were watching the bathers.

The day was warm and the beach was crowded. Groups of girls in flower-tinted dresses sat under the

tents. Long lines of bathing-dressed boys browned in the sun. Shouts and little screams and gusts of laughter came from the ever-changing figures in the surf and on the rafts. Bathing-house doors banged as the people went in and out, and from the men's side of the building could be heard the blows of some athletically inclined youth as he "punched the bag."

Catherine, who was going to bathe, went off to her house to dress, while Beatrice found a chair for her aunt and established her in the shadiest corner of the pavilion.

Mrs. Webster gazed straight before her in perfect silence for a few minutes; then she said, with great distinctness:

"Are all these people respectable, my dear?"

Her niece was saved the responsibility of a reply by the fact that Grifforth Chandos greeted her at the same moment.

"You don't often come here of a morning, Beatrice," he said. He had known her from childhood and always used her Christian name. "What brings you to-day? Here's Hamlin feasting his anarchistic eyes on the wretched proportions of the youthful millionaire. By the way, I didn't introduce him to you last night."

He put his hand on his friend's shoulder and turned him round by way of introduction.

Beatrice found herself looking up into the brilliant brown eyes of the young man she had seen at the boys' club the preceding night. Had ever young man before such an intent expression, such a straight nose and such a thick crop of yellow hair, she wondered?

"Why does he call you anarchistic?" she asked, smiling.

"Because I happened to say, the other day, that these boys here—" and he waved his hand toward a group of brown figures in brilliantly striped jerseys—"would never make good citizens, they'd been born into too much luxury, and that I should

like to abolish all inheritance and make each one of them work his own way up. I'd give him only a fair start."

"And what about the girls?" asked Beatrice, much interested.

Had ever any woman in the world such sweet eyes or such a charming face, Hamlin wondered.

"Oh, I dare say it would be good for them, too," he answered. "But I'm not dealing out justice this morning. I'm just the mildest, most peaceable, law-abiding person under the sun, and by to-morrow I dare say I may be wishing that I had been born in a palace myself. Isn't it good to be alive on a day like this? Only I'd rather be talking to you under the trees somewhere than on this burning beach."

"You might be cooler in the water, perhaps," suggested Beatrice. She really wanted to talk to him, but had a nervous desire to make it easy for him to leave her if he pleased.

"Don't despise me utterly," he said. "I hate surf bathing. It's a humiliating confession, but I do not swim well. I was brought up in the most inland of inland places, and I never did anything, in fact, but read all day long."

Beatrice nodded sympathetically. Here was a young man whose mind was evidently more to him than his muscles.

"If you are not going to bathe," he added, "may I stay here and talk to you?"

She made a little gesture toward an empty chair near by.

"Do," she said. "My aunt and I are here only to look on, and shall be very glad to be talked to. Aunt Wilhelmina, Mr. Hamlin."

Mrs. Webster, withdrawing her fascinated eyes for one moment from the tossing figures in the surf, gave Mr. Hamlin a stiff bow.

Grifforth Chandos sauntered away, murmuring something about a dip before luncheon.

Beatrice looked at the dazzling blue water and wondered what she should say next; then she looked at the

young man, and was somewhat embarrassed by the directness of his gaze.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I have a bad habit of staring at people when I am wondering about them, and I've been wondering about you ever since last night."

"There is nothing very extraordinary about me," she returned, a little uneasily, for the directness of his speech matched the directness of his look, and she did not know quite how to deal with it. "I'm a very commonplace sort of person."

"Are you?" said Hamlin. "You don't look it. You look as if you were half the time the saddest, and half the time the merriest person in the world. I beg your pardon again—you don't like that. You think I oughtn't to speak to you about yourself when I've only just met you. Please forgive me. I wouldn't offend you for anything. But somehow, when I was watching you last night—you looked so out of place among all those little rascals, and yet so pathetically anxious to do your duty by them—I could not help speculating about you, and I speculated so much that I felt as if I knew you quite well this morning. One reason I talked so long about—what was it I talked about so long?—was, that for some unaccountable reason you seemed interested, and I wondered why."

"Because I thought you were in earnest," said Beatrice, "and I like to listen and to talk to people who are in earnest about something. I like, sometimes, to be interested in things that are different from all this." She glanced over her shoulder at the pavilion, where groups met and dissolved, and people stood or sat, or lounged against the railing, talking and laughing.

Detached sentences floated to their ears. "My machine's a beauty." "He certainly fouled the *Ghost* at the start." "Did you ever see such hair. It's yellower than the sun." "Her figure's not half-bad, but her conversation, my dear!"

Beatrice looked at Hamlin and smiled.

"You didn't talk like that," she said.

"Oh, I've just got the habit of making speeches about theories," he said. "You mustn't think I'm serious except in spots. But there's quite enough to be earnest about, of course, only, don't let's be earnest today, shall we? But yes, of course we shall, if you like."

Beatrice disclaimed any grave conversational intentions. She had meant only that at times one got tired of gossip and chatter—not that she was capable of anything much better, she didn't mean that, only she knew how much better things there were to be capable of—and presently she found herself unfolding certain cherished theories she had in her mind for helping people. To help people, to be of use to somebody; that particular want in Beatrice's nature kept peeping out through all the emphatic likes and dislikes expressed in her sentences. And her schemes were always for the worst boys, the most wretched women, the most unprofitable servants; whereas Hamlin's unpitying philosophy contemned all incompetence to the devil, and only cleared the way of chance to those whose footsteps sounded success. The big clock over the bathing-house pointed to the hour of one before she rose to go home. The young man followed her slowly as she and her aunt walked up the path, constantly stopping to exchange a word with this or that acquaintance.

"Who is that young woman coming out? and indeed, she ought never to have gone into the water," said Mrs. Webster, indicating an over-developed figure in a purple tunic (such as one sees in the pictures of French bathing beaches), long, full trousers coming half-way down the leg, and white sandals, with crossed fastenings over the instep. The flaming red hair of the lady in question would have attracted the attention of a blind man.

"That's Mrs. Merrythought," answered Beatrice, with a little shudder of disgust. "She's a horrid woman. She ran away from her husband, who

was a bishop, and married an actor, a mere boy. She—"

"A divorced woman!" cried Mrs. Webster. "My dear, let us go on quickly. In my day such things were not tolerated. Such people were not seen or known. It is unpleasant to me to be in the same place with her."

"I don't think her being divorced is dreadful," said Beatrice. "I don't see why two people who don't get on together should have to stay together all their lives. But she's just horrid herself, Aunt Wilhelmina."

"It was all in the papers, I remember," said Mrs. Webster. "I wondered at the time how I should act if I were ever brought face to face with such a creature. I wish I had not left my lorgnettes at home, my dear. Do you think I might borrow a pair from anybody? I should really like to see what that person looks like."

But unfortunately the flaming-haired lady disappeared into her bathing-house, and Mrs. Webster's curiosity remained unsatisfied.

Catherine joined them at this moment, and Beatrice, falling behind a little in the narrow path, found herself addressed by Hamlin.

"May I come to see you, please?" he said, in his direct way. "I don't know whether I ought to ask, or whether I ought to wait till you signify that such is your pleasure. But it's perfectly safe for me to say I should be awfully glad if it were your pleasure—and I suppose I ought to add, your aunt's—soon."

"We are always at home late in the afternoon," she answered, conventionally, "and I shall be very glad if you will come," she added, more cordially.

"To-morrow, then," he said, helping her into the carriage, and thinking he had never seen such a multiplicity of lace frills or such dear little pointed shoes in all his life before.

"To-morrow afternoon? I'm afraid we promised to go to polo, but the day after—that's Sunday—if you like."

"The day after," he echoed, step-

ping back as the carriage started, "I shall certainly come."

Mrs. Seaton was rather silent on the drive home.

She was more difficult to suit than usual about her hats when she came to dress for polo the next day. One was on the bed, one—rather battered—on the floor, and she was just removing another from her head when Catherine came on the scene.

"There you are, all ready and exactly on time, dear little Catherine," she said. "Did you ever see such a fright as I am?"—making a hideous grimace at herself. "I should think Marie would be discouraged, for no matter how much pains she takes I always look just the same, only sometimes worse. I'm so sorry I tore the lace bow on that toque! Poor Marie!" stroking her maid's cheek with the tip of a slender forefinger, "don't mend it to-day. It doesn't matter when it's mended. I'll mend it. I like your hat, Catherine."

"You always like other people's things better than your own, dear," said Catherine, laughing. "Any one of yours is prettier than mine, really."

"Do you think so? Oh, I wish you'd take one, or all of them," cried Beatrice, turning round from the glass. "If you knew how much pleasure it would give me to see you in them!" And indeed she would gladly have given away anything she had to anybody who wanted it, and never have thought a second time about it, in her generous heart.

"If Madame would try the hat with the rose wreath once more," pleaded the maid.

And Madame, remarking that it did not make any difference what a person like herself had on if she were only neat and fresh, crowned herself with the rose-wreathed hat and departed.

It seemed to meet with the approval of one long-limbed, lean, broad-shouldered young giant named Hamlin, for he hardly took his eyes off its wearer all the afternoon.

Beatrice was beginning to find that there was some pleasure in going out

"when there was somebody you care to meet" or who appeared to care about meeting you.

She and Catherine had been sitting in the victoria watching the polo; at least, Catherine had been watching, and Beatrice had been conscious that mallets were clashing, men were shouting and ponies' quick little feet thud-thudding in her immediate vicinity. Sometimes a bell clanged, and always the breeze blew and the sun shone. There was a feeling of excitement and holiday-making in the air, and a gay sound of light voices and laughter.

Hamlin had been standing talking to her, with his foot on the step of the carriage. They had not plunged very deeply into the affairs of the universe that day. They had been discussing things of a more personal nature. He had been half-regretting the unsporting character of his education—that was, if she thought all men ought to do that sort of thing well—but even at college he had been an incorrigible reader; he hadn't cared for rowing or football, though they used to come and badger him about it every year. He had not ever made friends very easily, and he supposed that was a bad sign.

Beatrice hoped it wasn't, for she had not made many friends among girls of her own age when she was young. Hamlin smiled at the expression. She had had rather a sad childhood, and her grandmother, who had brought her up from her early orphaned days, had not thought the companionship of other children necessary for her happiness. So she had been a lonely child, and, she was afraid, rather a bad child—at least, her governess had said so—and everybody had always told her how ugly and unattractive she was, so that when she first grew up she was astonished that people liked her. Then she stopped suddenly, blushing and confused, surprised to find how much she had said, and fearing that he would think it necessary to contradict her.

But he did not. It never occurred to him that this slender, sweet-voiced,

brilliant-eyed, gracious lady could have suffered under such astonishment long. But he felt that her little girlhood, from which she hardly seemed to him to have emerged, in spite of her gentle, assured manner, must have been pathetic in its way.

"And you had nobody but your grandmother and the governess?" he said.

"Nobody," she answered; "and then my grandmother died, and I went abroad with my governess, and traveled."

"And now you've come home and are living with your aunt, aren't you?" he went on as she paused. "That was your aunt who was with you the other day, wasn't it?"

She looked up in surprise. Was it possible he didn't know she was married? Before she could speak, a group of laughing people—a rosy, yellow-haired girl and three or four men—stopped close to the carriage. The girl's ridiculous little shoe had come unlaced, and there was a humorous controversy going on among the men as to who should tie it. She put her foot on the wheel of the victoria, smiling at Beatrice, whom she knew.

"You are tying it with a true-lovers' knot, Bertie," she said to the successful candidate, "and I'm a married lady, so it isn't proper. I shall tell my husband."

Hamlin also smiled at Beatrice.

"I'm glad you are not a married lady," he said. "The idea of that child's having a husband! There ought to be a course of 'married life' in the last term of every boarding school year, to teach women what a serious thing it is they go into so lightly."

So he did not know! Beatrice wondered how it could possibly have happened, and what to say. It was so awkward to blurt out "I am married!" and it was rather fun, in a way, his not knowing. But then it was a thing he must soon find out. Someone might address her by her married name within the next few minutes. It would be foolish not to tell him. Catherine and Grifforth Chandos, who had just

appeared, were clamoring to be taken to the big red-and-yellow striped tent for tea, and Beatrice, as she followed her friend's dragging lilac flounces over the grass, resolved to make her announcement at once. But Hamlin was a few paces behind, having stopped to pick up a little wisp of a handkerchief and an enormous pink parasol that she had dropped in getting out of the carriage, and before he could join her, a middle-sized, elderly lady, with layers of rustling silk flounces and a hat full of peacock feathers, had borne down upon them.

"My dear," said this lady, who was known as Mrs. General Sentinel, "you are the very person I want to see. I've just taken a cook on trial, who says he used to live with your grandmother. I remember his dinners were excellent, but what I wanted to ask was—is the man extravagant? You really have no idea how extravagant people's cooks are in this place. Mrs. Condor's bill at the butcher's last month was something enormous. I won't mention the figures, but I happened to be at the telephone when she was remonstrating with Mr. Jointz, and I was surprised myself. He swore she had had every single item on it, and indeed, he said the same thing to me the next day when I spoke to him about it. Do you find Jointz very expensive, as butchers go?"

"I don't fret very much about the bills, Mrs. Sentinel," returned Beatrice, demurely. "I suppose it would be better if I did, but I hate so to think about food. I'd have chops and mashed potatoes every day if I could. Toinette is very good and economical, and I leave it all to her. I don't remember about the cook you've taken. Don't you hate people who 'live well' and have 'well-trained servants'?"

"I'm afraid I don't agree with you," said Mrs. Sentinel, with rather a sniff, which the natural uplifting of her sharp little, middle-aged nose greatly emphasized. "I like to be well served, and I prefer good food to bad. I even prefer to go to houses

that are well run. I like to see how people live."

Beatrice's thick black lashes lifted just enough to send a mischievous glance at Catherine.

"I'm afraid my house isn't well run," she said. "I don't take half enough interest. I like pictures, and books, and beautiful things to put into it, but as long as the servants are contented, and no one particularly objects to anything, I don't much care how I live."

"Then you can't tell me about the cook, evidently. Well, I'll try him. By the way, perhaps you would do me a favor and come and fill a place for me at dinner to-night?"

"To-night—what are we doing to-night, Catherine?" demanded Beatrice, affrighted, grasping her friend's arm.

"Isn't it the McMasters' moonlight picnic?" returned Catherine, promptly.

"Not to-night," said Mrs. Sentinel. "I know, for my maid has a brother who is their footman, and he always tells her when they entertain. Besides, the McMasters are coming to me to-night. They say he has given her some superb new emeralds, and I want to see them. I was in hopes she'd wear them at the ball, but I suppose she couldn't, with that yellow dress. Did you happen to notice whether there was embroidery or appliqué on that gown? Really I could not tell without touching it. Well, good-bye. I shall hope to see you to-night. Mr. Chandos is coming. And he has promised to bring you, you know, Mr. Hamlin," nodding to the latter. "Eight o'clock, my dear," to Beatrice; "don't forget."

"I'm awfully sorry—" began Mrs. Seaton. Catherine gave her a mischievously good-natured little pinch.

"Go," she said, "and amuse yourself for once. I'll take excellent care of Mrs. Webster. She'll go, with pleasure, Mrs. Sentinel."

Beatrice looked somewhat bewildered, but in her heart she began to think that "it would be easier to tell him at the dinner."

She was a little troublesome about dressing again that evening, and discarded a flowered silk and a peach-pink brocade for a yellow lace frock, in which she looked like a very distinguished, tall little girl. She wasn't going to put on long trains and heavy jewelry only fit for Winter. She hated "ball dresses" for small dinners in Summer. It was very bad taste. It was very vulgar. She hoped Catherine wouldn't think her too selfish for going out and leaving her alone with Aunt Wilhelmina. She hadn't known just what to say. She was always getting into scrapes because she couldn't say "No."

Catherine laughed at her.

"You were going to say 'No.' I accepted for you. Go out and have your vanity flattered a little. It will do you good. What you want is a tonic for your self-esteem."

It was a foggy night, and the lamps in the roads and the lights of the automobiles cast great fan-shaped shadows through the gray mist. The whole world seemed to be shut into a long alleyway full of rolling wheels and ringing bells. Beatrice thought she should never turn into the gate of the Sentinels' place. She was late, as usual. That was because Marie would put a rose in her hair at the last minute. It felt very wobbly.

Mr. Hamlin was to take her in to dinner. As soon as she looked at him she saw that he knew.

"I'm to have the pleasure of taking you in, Mrs. Seaton," he said, ceremoniously, and they walked the length of the room in perfect silence.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he asked, as they took their places.

"I never imagined you didn't know until this afternoon," she said, "and I was interrupted just as I was going to tell you. How was it you didn't, I wonder? You were staying with people who know me very well. Not that it makes much difference, does it? Only it's rather funny."

"Yes," he answered, without smiling, "it is rather funny."

"Perhaps you don't like to talk to

old married ladies," she went on, laughing. "Are you as young as that?"

"No, I'm not as young as that, I'm afraid," he returned, smiling a little this time. "It's only—don't you see? —that ever since I met you I've been thinking about you; and ever since I've been thinking about you, I have thought of you as unmarried. It's a bit of a shock. I suppose I might have known."

"It is rather odd that you didn't hear anybody speak of me or to me by my married name."

"The Chandoses call you Beatrice," he said, "when they speak of you, and I would not ask them any questions. I don't know why. At least, I do know, but it would not interest you. And it so happens that no one has called you Mrs. Seaton before me until to-night, when Mrs. Sentinel told me I was to take 'Mrs. Seaton' in to dinner, and then spoke of my having been with you this afternoon. Then I knew."

"And you didn't like my not having told you?"

"I didn't mind your not having told me. I just hated the fact."

Beatrice gazed at him for a moment with her great eyes open to their fullest extent.

He pulled himself together. If he showed her what he was feeling she might be offended. She might even think it necessary to forbid him to come to see her. At least, she might change in some way her attitude toward him, and he could not bear that.

"I disapprove of marriage in theory," he said, gravely. "I think it's an interference with people's freedom, and everybody should be free."

A theory! Beatrice was relieved of all embarrassment. There was nothing wrong in discussing any sort of a theory, and the difficulties of married life were so thoroughly discussed that by the time dessert appeared they had come to the most revolutionary conclusions. Beatrice was interested and amused, and Hamlin more in love than ever. He rather imagined that her husband did not

understand her. What mere husband could?

It was a delightful dinner, Beatrice told Catherine, who came in to see her on her return. Mr. Hamlin had taken her in; he had also talked to her after dinner, and he was coming to see her the next afternoon. He was the most interesting person she had met for a long time, and really a nice boy. He had such sensible views. It was so pleasant to discuss things with him!

"And I really think he likes me, Catherine. I don't mean *much*, you know. I dare say it was just because he wanted to talk, and I was the nearest woman. But still, I think he likes me."

It certainly appeared so the next day, when he arrived at four o'clock and stayed until half-past six.

Mrs. Webster's sense of propriety was outraged. In her day, she said, young men did not pay visits of such length to young married women. Neither did she approve of being "at home" on Sunday. Sunday was a day of meditation.

Mrs. Seaton disclaimed any desire to interfere with her aunt's meditations, and begged that she would not permit her usual habits to be broken into by any modern custom of which she disapproved. Tea could be sent to her room on Sunday if she preferred it.

Further controversy was diverted by the arrival of a telegram which recalled Catherine to town on the following day.

Beatrice was in despair. What should she do without her? She knew she should be naughty. Aunt Wilhelmina was so trying, and she was sure they would not be on speaking terms by the time Jack came home,

"I want to tell her how 'narrow' she is every time I see her, and I know it will come out sooner or later. And so stiff in her backbone! Just as if she had a poker down the middle seam of her dress," and she walked up and down the room in exact imitation of Mrs. Webster, who had just gone up stairs. "I often tell Jack

that if I had known about her I should not have married him. Poor Jack! I hope he's enjoying himself. He's written to me only once, to say he hoped the chimney was up all right and that I wasn't having a bad time, and I haven't answered yet, just so that I could tell Aunt Wilhelmina I had not written at all to him, if she asked me. She's always prying into my relations with Jack. I wish Mr. Webster were alive, so that I could retaliate. Oh, Catherine, don't go and leave me! I don't know what I shall do without you!"

But Miss Blair was obliged to go, and Mrs. Seaton, with many lamentations, saw her off by the afternoon train the next day.

Matters did not improve after her departure. Hamlin dined at the house that very evening, his own hosts being all engaged elsewhere, and Grifforth Chandos having laughingly informed Mrs. Seaton of the fact.

Aunt Wilhelmina was in her most lofty humor, and made herself so superciliously exasperating that she drove Beatrice to do what she had protested against doing all Summer—going to an enormous ball which was in progress that night at one of the largest and most beautiful houses in the neighborhood. Hamlin, whom she took down in the carriage with her, on purpose to defy Mrs. Webster's stony glare of opposition, thought he had never seen her look so charming.

Her cheeks were scarlet, and her eyes, under their thick lashes, as brilliant as polished jewels. There were many women at the ball prettier, handsomer, more beautiful than she, but none, he was quite sure, with the same air of delicate distinction. His tall, slender, rose pink-petaled lady! He wondered that every eye in the room did not follow where she moved. His eyes did, and so did he, whenever he could. He did not dance, but stood against the wall watching her. He took her to supper, and they sat at a little table near the white stone balcony of the piazza, with palms rustling above their heads and the sea sounding out of the darkness at their

feet, until long after the dancing had begun again. She seemed more interested and more gracious even than usual, as if she wanted to make up to him for the constraint and discomfort of the earlier part of the evening. But Hamlin had not minded, had hardly noticed, Mrs. Webster's attitude. He was beginning not to mind anything so long as he could look at, talk to and be with Beatrice. And surely it could make no difference to her if he never let her know what was in his heart.

He felt, though, that he had put as much restraint upon that organ as it was capable of enduring for one evening, and therefore obliged himself to refuse when, in her sweet, natural way, she offered to drive him as far on his homeward road as she was going, and he did not stand looking after her for more than five minutes after she had gone.

But the two following days found him ringing her front door bell at the earliest afternoon hour permitted by etiquette, and on both occasions they sat on the enclosed piazza and talked until the sun went down and a little crescent moon floated on a wisp of cloud over the water. Of people and nations and languages they talked, and why the new times should be better than the old; and twice Mrs. Webster, returning very late from a long drive with a friend, heard Hamlin's voice as she crossed the hall, and entered the room just in time to see him kiss Beatrice's hand as he said good-bye.

"My dear," she said, on the second occasion, "what is that young man's occupation?"

"I really don't know," answered her niece, dreamily. "Why?"

"Because, in my opinion, the sooner he resumes his vocation the better. He comes here too often."

"I don't agree with you," said Beatrice.

"You saw him on Friday at the beach," continued her aunt. "You saw him on Saturday afternoon at polo. Mrs. Sentinel tells me that he never left your side the night you

dined with her. He spent all Sunday afternoon here. He dined here on Monday and went to the ball with you; he came yesterday; he was here again to-day—”

“And he may also be here to-morrow,” cried Beatrice, highly incensed. “Do not let us discuss it, Aunt Wilhelmina. I am not a child, you know, and in the matter of whom I see, I must judge for myself entirely, if you please.”

“Your conduct will give rise to gossip,” said Mrs. Webster, “and that no young married woman can afford.”

“Gossip!” interrupted Beatrice. “Why should there be gossip? What is there to gossip about? It’s rather hard if I may not have a friend without all this fuss.”

“Such friendships are dangerous.”

“Perhaps they were in your time, Aunt Wilhelmina, but really, we are not so much on the lookout for evil now. I don’t see why you should assume that I am horrid just because I’m neither a prude nor a saint. But whatever you assume, I am not going to give up seeing Mr. Hamlin. He’s the only person I have had any pleasure in talking to for ever so long. Nobody else seems to be interested in the things that interest me. I shall see him as often as possible for the rest of my life.”

Dinner was not a particularly agreeable meal that evening. Mrs. Webster looked down her nose and never spoke except in answer to a direct question. Mrs. Seaton was still exasperated and would not conciliate her. Never was bedtime more welcome to the two ladies.

Hamlin and Beatrice went bicycling the next afternoon, and Mrs. Webster watched them from the window with an inscrutable, stony look.

“I wonder whether I shall ever have such a pleasant week again,” said the young man, as they dismounted at the door on their return.

“Of course you will,” said Mrs. Seaton, gaily. “Your holiday isn’t over yet, and then, you know, some day we are to go abroad together—you said you’d come the next time

Jack and I went—and we’ll go back to Italy, and I’ll show you some of the beautiful things you didn’t see before.”

“And I’ll show you a priest-driven, soldier-ridden, overtaxed people, who plod through their lives like beasts of burden. It made my blood boil to travel through Italy—just to see the look in the people’s faces.”

“And I’m so selfish,” cried Beatrice; “I never saw anything of all that. I was only looking for the beautiful things.”

“As you always will, my sweet lady,” he answered. “I beg your pardon. No, I think I’d better not go abroad with you. I must stay at home and work, you know. Some day, perhaps, I shall amount to something. I should like you to be proud of having known me, but I don’t suppose anything so marvelous as that could ever happen. It’s ridiculous.”

“It is not ridiculous at all. Why shouldn’t you make something worth while of your life? Only you’re not going to set about it just to-day, are you?”

He gave a curious little laugh.

“I don’t know that,” he said. “One can’t tell what is coming to meet one from behind the next corner. Ah, well, whatever it is, good-bye for to-day. You can’t know how I have liked being with you. Liked! What an absurd word! ‘Liked being with you.’ But I’m afraid to express it in any other way for fear of offending you. Good-bye.”

Beatrice walked slowly up the steps, through the hall and out on to the enclosed piazza. She dropped her little white gloves and her veil as she passed, and the butler picked them up and put them on the table as usual.

“Tea, please, Thompson,” she said, “here on the piazza; and ask Mrs. Webster if she feels like coming down.”

But Mrs. Webster was already there, seated in the straightest-backed chair the place afforded. She exchanged commonplaces with her niece while the tea-table was being brought and the tray set upon it, but after the servant had gone she put

down her cup and saucer, cleared her throat once a little nervously, and said:

"I think you may expect Jack home this evening, Beatrice. I telegraphed to him yesterday."

Beatrice's hand shook so with sudden passion that she had to put her own cup down to prevent its falling on the floor.

"You telegraphed to him!" she cried. "And for what reason? But I need not ask. You think unwarrantable things, Aunt Wilhelmina, and you take unwarrantable liberties. You must have a horrid mind. How did you dare do such a thing?"

She rose from the table as she spoke and approached Mrs. Webster. She shivered so with anger that she could hardly stand. She felt absolutely sick with rage and disgust.

"I have nothing to say to you," she went on, "except that you will have to explain to Jack yourself why you sent for him, and what you think of his wife. Whatever comes of this, you will be responsible. I shall go to town to-night."

She rang the bell.

"Telephone to the stable that I shall want the carriage at eight o'clock to take me out," she said to the footman, "and tell Thompson that Mrs. Webster is dining alone. I shall not dine at home."

Up stairs in her room she walked up and down in blind fury, pushing the chairs out of her way to make a clear space for her passionate steps. All her feelings were outraged—her pride, her dignity, her self-esteem. Seen through this horrible old woman's eyes, the idyl of the last few days became the plot of any vulgar modern novel.

And Jack had been sent for! Jack, who wouldn't understand it, or her, or anything but that he ought, in future, always to stay at home and look after her! Probably Aunt Wilhelmina would make him see that he ought never to leave her alone again. Never in all her life! She must be watched. She felt already like a rat in a trap. It was intolerable. She could not rest till she was safely

started. She would go to her house in town and make what terms she pleased from there. Did Aunt Wilhelmina really think she was going to stay here, like a child, to be scolded and punished?

The housemaid came to light the lamps, and Mrs. Seaton smoothed her hair and managed to compose her quivering face. As calmly as she could she changed her dress and tried to think what things should be put into her bag. Very little was necessary, for she always left half her wardrobe in town. It would have been a comfort to her in many ways to have had her maid with her, but Marie had been given permission to go to a ball that night, and Beatrice was always considerate about her servants.

She tried to eat the sandwich and drink the sherry that the housemaid had brought her, and then, finding that every mouthful choked her, hurried down stairs. Mrs. Webster, with a set, white face, was waiting for her in the hall, but Beatrice dashed past her and flung herself into the carriage.

It was Thursday night, and the footman asked if they should drive to the Boys' Club, and seemed surprised when she said, "To the boat." It was late. Suppose they should miss it. She couldn't get away that night. She put her head out of the window and asked if they couldn't drive a little faster. But when they reached the dock it appeared that there had been some delay. She had a quarter of an hour to wait.

As she turned away from the ticket office she came face to face with Hamlin. His face flushed as their eyes met, and hers turned pale.

"You here!" she stammered. "Why, where are you going? I mean—I beg your pardon—I was surprised to see you. I should not have asked like that."

"You shall always ask me what you please, my lady," he said, "and I'll tell you. I'll make a clean breast of it. I meant to do it this afternoon. I'm running away."

He half smiled as he spoke, but his eyes looked very stern.

"Running away!" echoed Beatrice, still confused by the sudden meeting. "So am I. Something has happened that makes it impossible for me to stay. I'm going to town."

"To-night? By this boat?"

"Yes, to-night, by this boat."

Hamlin shrugged his shoulders. "It's on the knees of the gods," he said. "I did my best." Then he turned to her with a great delight in his eyes. "Sweet of my heart, didn't you know I was running away from you? Didn't you guess that I could not stay without telling you I loved you, as I tell you now? Only I can never tell you how much. Not in all my whole life. You don't know what you are to me; you don't know what ambition you put into me. Don't look like that! Surely you guessed."

She moved away from him and went and sat down in a corner of the small waiting-room. He followed. There were very few people about, and except for the footman standing near the door with her dressing-bag, nobody to whom she was known.

"Are you angry? You can't be angry. Oh, if you could only know how I feel! Nobody could be more afraid to offend you. Nobody could love you better, nobody—it sounds conceited, but I think it's true—could understand you better. You say something has happened at home that makes it impossible for you to go back. Don't go back. Don't ever go back. I beg your pardon, I'm mad to speak like that. But I've kept it to myself for so long, and I love you, I love you, I love you."

Beatrice's head swam. The lights were blurred for a minute and Hamlin's voice sounded from a great way off. She couldn't think. She was confused. She had been through such a storm of anger, and now this other storm was sweeping her off her feet. One thing only seemed certain. She could not go home; she must go on to town that night and think it out there.

"You said the future was on the

knees of the gods," she said. "I can't think. I don't know what to say to you. It suddenly seems to me that perhaps I was running away from you, too. I thought I was angry with—with somebody else." She got up and walked slowly across the floor.

"You are not going back?" said Hamlin, hoarsely.

She looked up at him with vague eyes. "No," she said, "I'm going to town to-night as I intended."

She took her dressing-bag from the footman, got out a pencil and wrote on a piece of paper:

"I am going to town to-night. Mr. Hamlin is going up in the same boat. I do not know whether I shall come back to you or not.—Beatrice."

This she folded and sealed with a foreign stamp she found in her purse. Then she directed it to her husband, and gave it to the man as she dismissed him. She felt like a woman in a dream as she walked over the gangplank on to the boat with Hamlin, and she looked so white that he was frightened.

He thought she was faint, and hurried her to a chair, saying:

"You look so pale, sweetheart. You must let me get you something. I've a flask somewhere in one of my bags. You will be really ill. Stay here one moment and I'll get it for you."

As he left her, it dimly came back to her mind that this had happened before. When she started on her wedding trip with Jack she had been awfully tired, and he had dashed off to get her his man's infallible remedy in just the same impulsive way. It seemed so domestic. A woman may have a friend, or even a lover—but she cannot be domestic with two men. Consciousness of her position and a sudden courage returned to her. What was she doing?—she who had resented so fiercely Aunt Wilhelmina's insulting thought? She was a horrid woman, then. She must be, or Hamlin would never have said what he had to her. But he did mean it; surely he really loved her? Then she was ruining his life at the very beginning, and Jack's at the middle, and

her own altogether. She must be a wicked woman, a horrible woman, as bad as Mrs. Merrythought. She saw Hamlin coming back, threading his way among the passengers to the dark corner where he had left her seated, and a sudden revulsion of feeling made her almost hate him. She started to her feet.

"I must go," she said. "I must get off the boat. Don't—please don't try to stop me. Don't argue with me. I will write to you. I have been a fool. I've been selfish and only thought of my own amusement and pleasure and interest. I will not spoil anybody's life—not my husband's, nor yours, nor my own. Yes, yes, I believe you love me, but if you understand me, let me go."

He stood still and looked down at her for an instant.

"Go, then," he said. "I would not have you do anything that you do not wish to do. But go very quickly, my sweet little lady, for God knows it's hard to let you."

He turned away, and she sprang across the gangplank and disappeared. The carriage had gone, of course, but she easily found a cab, and told the man to drive as fast as possible to her house. If only she might get there before Jack got her letter! She was as eager to return as she had been to escape. Suppose he would not take her back! Suppose, when she got there, he would not let her come in! She wasn't sure but that he might consider the letter enough cause for separation, if not for divorce. Then she would be exactly like Mrs. Merrythought, with the flaming hair—no better. She remembered what she had said to Catherine, that some day she should do something dreadful. Well, now she had done it. Poor Jack! How sorry and angry he would be! What should she say to him first? But perhaps he would drive her away before she could speak. Of course he would, if he had got her letter. Well, she had brought it on her own head, and must endure it. Only she wished she could have told him—explained it to him—now

that she meant to be good. Very likely he would never understand.

The cab stopped at the door. It was a little open; doubtless one of the men had slipped out to do a little "general courting." She paid and dismissed the cabman and stole through the hall and into the drawing-room.

Jack was sitting in an easy-chair on one side of the fireplace; his head was thrown back and his eyes were shut, but he was not asleep, for the fingers of the hand on his knee clenched and unclenched themselves as she watched him. She swallowed once or twice.

"Jack," she said, breathlessly, "I've come home."

He started up.

"You are early to-night," he said. "The Boys' Club must have been less obstreperous than usual this week."

Beatrice stared at him; her eyes looked enormous in her white face.

"Have you seen Aunt Wilhelmina?" she asked.

"No," he said. "They told me she had gone to bed with a bad headache. I supposed, from the telegram she sent me, that she was at the last gasp and wanted me to witness her will. But I was coming back, anyhow."

"Didn't William give you a note?" asked Beatrice, with dry lips that could hardly form the words, "a note from me explaining—"

"About where you had gone?" said Jack. "Why, he did say something about a note that you had given him, which had blown out of his hand on the way up, and confounded himself in excuses. But it was all right. I knew. Isn't this Thursday? You look tired, my dear. Go to bed and to sleep as soon as possible."

He kissed her gently, and she turned and went to the door.

"I shall have a great deal to tell you to-morrow, Jack," she said, "but I'll go now."

And after she was gone, he took a folded paper with a torn foreign stamp on it from his pocket and burned it over the lamp.

There seemed to be some things that Jack did understand.

BALLADE OF THE FOOTBALL-MAN

MANY there be that golfing go
Upon the links to have their swing,
Yclad in garments gay that glow
As doth the sun when westering;
Still some there be to baseball cling,
And tennis claims its little clan;
But if you want to see "the thing,"
Behold the lusty football-man!

Forsooth, he lets his hair to grow
As doth the festive sprout in Spring;
And should both eyes be black as woe,
'Tis pride he feels therein—no sting!
His followers make the welkin ring
From far Beersheba unto Dan;
And if you'd gaze upon a king,
Behold the lusty football-man!

In midnight dreams he "tackles low;"
"A touchdown!" you will hear him sing;
Although there ne'er was such a "show,"
He's every girl "upon the string."
When he goes forth his foes to fling,
The head-guard, nose-guard, shin-guard plan
Makes him a sight for marveling—
Behold the lusty football-man!

ENVOY

Prince, all the other games are slow,
And fall beneath the public ban;
There's only one game now—and so
Behold the lusty football-man!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



THE SURPRISES OF CIVILIZATION

M R. NEWRICH (*at metropolitan hotel*)—Mariar, pess them limee beans.
MRS. NEWRICH—Them's not beans, John; them's salty ammons.

HER CHROMATIC FATHER

SHE lives in the house with the pillars
 And portico quaint,
 Where dwelt, years ago, the Van Twillers—
 Dutch blood without taint.
 And to me 'tis a mansion elysian,
 The fairest in town,
 For she—she's a dream and a vision—
 Her father is Brown.

The rooms have the faint, subtle, musty
 Perfume of old books—
 Queer volumes, thumbed, tattered and dusty,
 Are piled in their nooks.
 The lore of the long buried sages
 Before one is spread;
 In the wit and the wisdom of ages
 Her father is read.

But ah! in the practical knowledge
 Of beauty and youth—
 The learning not taught at a college—
 He's lacking, in truth.
 Mayhap he was once not as stupid
 In Love's fair demesne,
 But now, 'mid the wiles of Dan Cupid,
 Her father is green.

He knows not the secrets that hover
 O'er some old romance—
 The fingers entwined 'neath the cover,
 The swift, tender glance.
 He knows not—but why undeceive him?—
 I'll wager 'tis true
 That, when he is told she would leave him,
 Her father is blue.

JOE LINCOLN.



OPPORTUNITY FOR INFERENCE

MAUD ASKINGTON—Isn't Jack Huggins a trifle loquacious at times?
GLADYS BEAUTIGIRL—No, indeed! With me he is generally very close-mouthed.

SURPRISE AT SIXTY

By Jean Dare

THE years of his life—precisely three score—had passed swiftly, like a long and happy day spent in the pursuit of knowledge. Not the knowledge found in musty volumes and obtained through weariness of the flesh and a wasting of the golden years, but that other and more radiant knowledge that comes of eating many good dinners, seeing many good plays, hearing much good music, and, above all, knowing many women, from Her Grace, on her pinnacle of virtue, down to little Suzanne, who has Louis Quinze heels on her walking shoes and inconsistently yellow hair that curls upward.

“A knowledge of women,” he was wont to say, quite gravely, “is the beginning of wisdom,” and that he was in very truth a wise man is witnessed by the fact that he was never heard to say that he “understood” women. His attitude was ever modest and humble, as befitted one approaching the inscrutable, and when asked for advice by younger men—as very often happened at his club—he ever went cautiously, and ended his counsel by the pious declaration: “But only God, who made them, can tell how they will act in any given emergency.”

So the years had flown lightly over his head—a very handsome head, with a heavy thatch of gray hair that was always parted straight down the middle, and that had proved a temptation to many a slender white hand. His dress was immaculate, and there was a fire in his eye that was likely to arouse a dangerous tenderness in the hearts of middle-aged widows, while not without its effects on shy

young débutantes who were just stealing timidly out from the nursery into the great world, there to learn with fear and rapture the ways of the unknown monster, man.

And he went joyfully along the way of his life, waking each morning with a fresh sense of the exquisite joy of living and a serene faith in the happiness the day might bring forth. And Fate, who dearly loves to be trusted, turned her most gracious smiles upon him and saved her frowns and ratings for the doubters.

It came about, on a day, that he met a girl—a bachelor girl—with frank and fearless eyes and the fine self-confidence bred of youth and hope. And as he looked upon her he said to himself: “At last a consistent woman!” She was thrilled with the sense of his wide world-knowledge and long experience. He seemed to her a sort of epitome of the pleasure of life, and since he was old—as old, indeed, as her father, who had died far back in the years, would have been—she would take him for her guide, philosopher and friend. And the great kindness that she felt looked out of a pair of expressive dark eyes, in which the mixture of innocence, unworldliness and cold reason rather puzzled him.

And, well, she was lithe and slender, and the way in which she lifted those childlike eyes—full of sweetness and trust and unspeakable things—to his, as he started to leave her, was a magnet that he could not resist. So he turned back, closed the door softly and quickly, and gathered her up in his arms. His mustache swept across her soft cheek and touched her warm red lips.

"O-o-h!" she moaned; "o-o-h! don't kiss me—*don't* kiss me!" with increasing passion and indignation.

Her voice broke, and a wave of self-contempt and remorse swept over him.

"Don't kiss me!" she continued, in tragic tones and with an agony of reproach in her face "Don't kiss me—with your hat on!"

For one moment he gazed down upon her in blank astonishment. Then a look of awe crept into his face, and he opened the door softly and went out.

And he smoked for three hours that night, with his feet in the window, looking out at the stars and praising Allah, who makes them so delightfully, so refreshingly various.



BREAKING THE NEWS

DEAREST MAMMA: Don't scold again,
And give me reason after reason
Why I should wait to meet more men,
And go at least through one more season.
I know I'd never meet a man
Like Jack; and Jack—well, he adores me.
I love him, really, all I can—
Why, any other man just bores me.

Now, don't be vexed; I hadn't heart
To send him off and let him worry;
Besides, I loved him at the start,
And Jack was in a dreadful hurry.
And so, the night of Edith's ball
Jack stayed till, finally, he told me
I must say "Yes"—well, that was all;
We were engaged! Now, please don't scold me.

You'll coax papa, now, there's a dear;
I'm sure he'll think that Jack is splendid.
Jack's ordered off; 'twill be a year
Before his Eastern cruise is ended.
When he comes back, he says, we'll live
In some nice little house so cozy.
You see—now please, *please* do forgive—
We've just been married!

Your own

JOSIE.
FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



THE SENSATION WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE

MISS SLYLEIGH—Are you a married man?

MR. FRANKLEIGH—No; but I'm the next thing to it—I'm in debt.

THE EPISODE OF THE EARL

By Louis Evan Shipman

"**M**Y dear child, if you have any real objections to make I shall be very glad to hear them, but don't be frivolous," said Mrs. Kennet, looking over to the pale, agitated girl in the corner, whose fluttering eyes lowered as they encountered the cold, steady glance of her mother.

"Mamma," she faltered, "I don't mean to be frivolous, really I don't, but you can't expect me to hear what you have just told me without——"

"Without what?" queried Mrs. Kennet, in an even, relentless tone which she fancied was touched by a sweet reasonableness, but which Sibyl Kennet knew, from nineteen years' experience, was only an expression of mild contempt for the opinion that chanced to differ from hers.

Nothing cowed the child more than this pretense of easy tolerance on her mother's part, for she knew it meant a mind sealed against every argument and a determination that her point, whatever it might be, should be carried at whatever cost. Ordinarily, Sibyl accepted this note of finality with a submissive grace that was simply the measure of her gentleness, of her powerlessness against the coarser, firmer grain of her mother's will; but in this instance, futile as she expected rebellion to be, every atom of opposition was roused in her.

"Without warning," she answered, her throat heaving and hot color slowly painting her cheeks.

"You talk as if there had been an accident."

"I should say a calamity," answered the girl, in a low voice,

frightened at what she thought seemed pertness.

"Sibyl, I can't understand you," said Mrs. Kennet, studying the girl's face closely. "You have an offer of marriage that not a girl in New York would refuse, and you act as if Lord Bidworth's proposal were an insult rather than an honor."

"I didn't mean that at all, mamma."

"Then what did you mean?"

"Only that—that it was all very sudden. I hardly know Lord Bidworth," said Sibyl, desperately, trying hard to think how the horrible idea could be driven from her mother's head.

"You've seen him about all Winter."

"Yes, but I don't know him."

"You mean you don't like him?"

"I mean that I don't love him," answered the girl, feeling instinctively that what she said would sound absurdly foolish to her mother.

"Oh!" was all Mrs. Kennet vouchsafed in reply, although a cold little smile that flickered around her thin lips said more.

"And besides," went on Sibyl, hurriedly, flushing furiously, "there are things about Lord Bidworth that—" She floundered hopelessly under Mrs. Kennet's icy scrutiny.

"Things?" questioned the older woman, raising her delicate brows, as if the unspeakable had been spoken. "What do nice girls know about *things*?"

"I can't help hearing what people say."

"How can the say of people affect one of the oldest and proudest names

in England? What has the idle tattle of a provincial city like this to do with a British nobleman? Are you mad, child? Do you not realize the opportunity that you have, that I have given you? Have you no ambition, none of my spirit, in you? 'What people say,' indeed! What will they say when you are Countess of Bidworth, pray?"

"Oh, mamma, I can't, I can't, I can't! Don't ask me! I'll do anything in the world for you, but—"

"But the thing I want you to do," said Mrs. Kennet.

"It's not that," pleaded the girl. "I'm not obstinate. I—I don't want to go away, to leave you—and Jim. It's that."

"Nonsense, Sibyl. You talk as if I wanted you to marry some foolish German prince or French count, instead of an Englishman."

"Oh, won't you understand, mamma?"

"I understand that you are wilful and unreasonable. It is the very natural result of your always having had your own way. But this time, Sibyl, I cannot give in to your whim."

For one wild moment the thought of open defiance flashed through the girl's head, but the idea faded from her as the full consciousness came to her of what open opposition to her mother would mean. The dampening pressure of Mrs. Kennet's will had reduced the flame of Sibyl's spirit until it flickered but fitfully or was wholly obscured, and the hopelessness of a struggle against her mother's present designs was vividly real to the girl's mind as it beat hopelessly about in search of some possible egress from the horrible snare that seemed spread about her.

"Does Jim know?" was all she could say, when once more her voice was at command.

"It will be time enough for James to know when everything is settled," answered Mrs. Kennet.

"Settled?" echoed Sibyl, vaguely.

"Yes. Lord Bidworth will dine with us to-morrow night *en famille*, and I shall expect you to give him

the answer that a dutiful daughter should."

"Oh, mamma!" cried the child, "you can't mean it—so soon!"

"I see no reason for delay," replied Mrs. Kennet. "Do stop that crying; it only hurts your voice and makes you look like a guy. And what it's all about is beyond me."

"What—what will Jim say?" quavered Sibyl.

"I don't know that your brother has anything to say about it. I shall write him to-morrow night of the engagement, and tell him to write to both you and Lord Bidworth. I am going to dress for dinner now. We dine at the Cortneys' to-night—don't be late." And Mrs. Kennet, feeling that at last her plans were well afoot, quietly left the miserable girl alone in the big, dim drawing-room.

Dazed and broken, with life itself seeming to fall away on all sides into blankness, she bent her whirling head forward on her arms and burst into a paroxysm of tears. It was the sense of her cowardice that filled her with bitterness. If she only dared to confront her mother with something of her mother's courage, she felt she could save herself, but the sickening knowledge of her impotence left her pulsing wildly like a frightened, trapped animal, not knowing which way to turn.

Then in her extremity she clutched at what seemed to her to be nothing but straw, the veriest folly. She stepped over to a desk and wrote the following telegram:

JAMES KENNET,
Claverley Hall,
Cambridge, Mass.
Come home at once. Important.
SIBYL.

and rang for a servant.

"Have this telegram sent immediately, Sydney," she said to the man.

"Yes, miss. Prepaid?"

"Yes."

And as the door closed behind him the first gleam of hope that had

shone" through the whole wretched business came to her.

II

SHE had not expected him till the following afternoon—that is, if it could be said she hoped for his coming at all. The vagaries of a Harvard undergraduate, such a one as Jim, anyhow, were no part of her ignorance, and Sibyl knew that luck would have to lean perceptibly the right way if her brother answered the summons. So she spent little time in speculation concerning his arrival or non-arrival. She was too busy striving to adjust her mental vision to a focus that would show her mother's monstrous proposal in its proper semblance, and if she did not succeed in that, she did succeed, by the vivid light of searching retrospection, in coming at many of Mrs. Kennet's less obvious processes.

She knew, and always had known since such knowledge had been possible, that her mother's life was dedicated to that very vague but still very definite organism for which no better name has been found than "society." Not the unwieldy and uninteresting mass to whom our sociologists are devoted, but that selected few whose existence depends upon complicated trivialities, and whose non-existence would not be of much moment—to the rest of the world. Among Sibyl's earliest remembrances—small wonder she never forgot, for it was a constant maternal theme—was Mrs. Kennet's insistence on the importance of knowing the right people and—the necessary corollary—of *not* knowing the wrong people. The basis of discrimination, however, was so intangible at times, and so uncertain, that Sibyl never really understood it; but her mother's calling list was a masterpiece of selection, and bore about the same relation to the Social Register that that compendious volume bears to the City Directory.

It was not the fact that her mother considered the Earl of Bidworth one

of the right sort of people to know which puzzled the girl; there was precedent enough for acquaintance with even so notorious a noble as the young Englishman, in their intimacy with half a dozen men who were always to be found at the same country houses, at the same dinners in town, and in the same boxes at the opera; her cause for fearful wonderment was Mrs. Kennet's desire that she should marry the man. And even the mystery of that faded away under Sibyl's eager speculation. Why the Earl of Bidworth should wish to make her his wife was a question that needed no consideration, even to a girl so little touched by the sophistications of the life about her as was Sibyl Kennet. Her fortune and her mother's fortune were explanation enough for that; and she saw mistily that her idea that the possession of money means marrying whom one pleases was entirely wrong, from her mother's point of view; that, in fact, the obligation to marry whom someone else pleases was just as strong as when it is a duty to get a rich husband as a matter of self-preservation.

All this and more born of her timidity and fear of her mother passed and repassed through the girl's mind during the long night hours that followed the declaration of Mrs. Kennet's intentions, and nothing came of it but a hopeless feeling that those intentions would fall short of realization only by the sheerest miracle—such a one as she knew was beyond her poor power. Could her brother Jim accomplish it? Sibyl had seen him perform what she considered prodigies with their mother, but in his own behalf and not on her account—a difference that was incalculable.

It was about eleven the next morning, with her chocolate but half-finished, when Sibyl was interrupted by the entrance of her maid, who announced that Mr. James was down stairs and wished to see her.

"My brother, Felton?" she cried.

"Yes, miss."

"Tell him to come up here, Felton. I'll be ready in a moment."

"Yes, miss."

All in a tremor, and filled with a sort of terror at this idea of revolt against her mother, which her brother's actual presence made positive, she nervously put the brushes to her glistening hair and threw on a long, loose Japanese sacque. A moment after, Felton's discreet tap was heard at the door, and Jim Kennet came in.

"Oh, Jim!" she cried, breathlessly, "I'm so glad you've come. How did you get here so early?"

"I came over on the midnight," answered Jim. "Fooled over my breakfast till I thought you would be about—then came around. What's the row?" he asked, holding her off gently at arms' length.

"Have you seen mother?" she asked, fearfully.

"No."

"That's lucky," Sibyl said, with a long breath. "I'm in horrible trouble, Jim."

"Trouble, Sib? Why, you are trembling all over. What is it?" he said.

"Oh, Jim, mother is going to make me marry," cried Sibyl, tears in her voice and filling her eyes. She had sworn to herself that she wouldn't break down, but she felt so weak and small and insignificant beside this big, bronzed brother Jim, that control was impossible, and she threw herself into a chair and began to sob.

"My dear old Sib, what is it?" said Jim, gently putting his arm about her. "Who is she going to make you marry?"

"That horrid—that dreadful Lord Bidworth," gasped the girl.

"The devil she is!" ejaculated Jim, straightening himself. "You don't mean that cad who was with the Cotters last Summer at Newport?"

"Yes," she answered, in a low voice.

"She hasn't written me anything about it," he said.

"I asked her if she had told you, and she said it would be time enough when the engagement was announced."

"Oh," replied Jim, "indeed! And when is it to be announced?"

There was something in his voice that brought Sibyl's glance to his face, and she saw the same little quizzical look there that so often passed across her mother's face when she was thinking things.

"He's to dine here to-night," said Sibyl. "Mother is to tell him then."

Jim did not reply immediately. He walked up and down the little boudoir, opening and shutting the lid of his cigarette case in a preoccupied way.

"May I smoke here, Sib?" he asked, after a while, and before she could tell him "yes," he had lighted a cigarette and inhaled a thick cloud, which a second after he sent swirling toward the ceiling. "See here, Sibyl, are you quite sure you don't want to marry him?"

"It would kill me, Jim!" she said, in a low voice, her eyes on the floor.

"Me too, almost," he answered, laconically, standing at the window and jingling the keys in his pocket. "Where's mother?" he asked, after what seemed an interminable time to her.

"In her room."

"I'll go down," he said, moving toward the door. As he opened it and stood with one step in the hallway, he turned to her, and was surprised to see her turned quite pale.

"What is it?"

"Don't—don't tell her I sent for you, Jim," said Sibyl, pleadingly.

He came over and kissed her.

"My dear sis," he said, wonderingly, "are you afraid of her?"

"Yes," she answered, in a little whisper.

"Well," said Jim, once more moving toward the door, and there was something in his voice that came back to her over his big shoulders which brought courage to the wilting child, "if you don't want to marry him, you sha'n't, that's all!" *

III

THE relations of mother and son in the Kennet family were of the slen-

derest. For ten years they had seen little of each other save during the vacation terms of school and university; and it must be confessed that to Mrs. Kennet these brief interregnums came with terrible frequency. Not that he bothered her to any great extent—Mrs. Kennet never permitted herself to be bothered—even when he was a lad, and since he had entered Harvard, she recognized fully what had only been a suspicion before—that her son proposed to do what he liked and think what he liked.

This course was made particularly easy for him by the foolish provision—it was Mrs. Kennet who considered it foolish—made by her late and unlamented husband, that Jim should come into control of his very considerable property at the age of twenty-one. And that was not the only grudge that she bore her husband's fatuity. In his very remarkable will he had decreed that on his son's coming of age he should assume the duties of co-executor of the estate. Whether, in doing this, Mr. Kennet had any malicious ulterior thought of avenging, in an ironical way, the despotic, almost contemptuous, sway that his wife exercised over him, is not known, but the shoe pinched the good lady to the galling point, particularly when it gradually came to her that Jim was not the same malleable creature as his father. Where he got his obstinacy and firmness she never knew, though the mystery would have been no mystery to any stranger who could have seen mother and son together that morning.

Mrs. Kennet was not in her room, and Jim, going on down stairs, found her busily engaged in the library with her secretary, who quietly departed on his entrance.

"Why, where did you come from, James?" said his mother.

"Came over from Boston last night on a little business."

"Shall you stay long?" she asked, stiffly. Nothing annoyed her more than what Jim called his "business trips." They were a constant re-

minder that one of the family reins hung slack, and she knew she could never hope to tighten it. She carried off their meeting very well, usually, with particular stress laid on the impersonal note that she had resolved should dominate the harmony or discord of their discourse.

"Two or three days," he replied, seating himself and having recourse once more to his cigarette case. "May I?" he asked, rolling one of the fat and fragrant Egyptians between his fingers.

"Of course," said she. "I don't know but that it is just as well," she went on.

"This cigarette?" asked Jim, smiling.

"No; your staying. I have something very important to tell you."

"What?" said he, knowing what was to come, and rather relishing the fact that his attack would, after all, not be a frontal one, but rather in the nature of a flank movement.

"Your sister is engaged to be married."

"Sibyl?" said Jim, fearing that Mrs. Kennet would pierce his disingenuousness.

"That's the only sister you have," was all she said, though.

"And you approve?" asked Jim.

Mrs. Kennet, like so many clever women, lacked the sense of humor, and it was the thing she loathed most in other people, particularly in Jim, whom she strongly suspected of laughing at her at times. The subtle irony of his last question, however, passed quite over her head, and she replied, complacently: "Yes, most decidedly"—just as if there would have been any engagement to announce if she had not!

"And to whom?"

"To Lord Bidworth. I think you met him last Summer."

"What does Sibyl say?" he asked, quietly.

"Unlike any decent girl, she seems utterly unconscious of her luck," answered Mrs. Kennet.

"I confess I don't see where the luck comes in myself, mother. To

marry that impossible, fortune-hunting snob—do you call that luck?"

"Don't be vulgar," said his mother.

"I wouldn't mind his being a nobleman," went on Jim, "if he were only a gentleman. But you are not really serious?" he added, moderating a little.

"Perfectly serious," answered his mother, decisively; "and I don't propose to be moved by the whims of a foolish girl or the ill-breeding of an impudent boy."

"Oh," said he, getting very cold suddenly and standing up in front of the fireplace.

These two, in opposition more or less, as they always were, had never had a serious struggle. Their contentions, whatever they might be—and they were frequent—always ended in compromises, and they were both conscious that there would be a battle for the mastery some day. Jim felt that it had come at last; Mrs. Kennet, too, and she thanked her stars that she occupied an impregnable position. Impregnable positions have a way of becoming pregnable, however.

"See here, mother," he said, after a moment, and she became aware for the first time that he loomed up, physically, very large before her, "you may be perfectly satisfied to become the mother-in-law of this—this man, but you forget, it seems to me, that in doing that you force a relationship upon me—a relationship that I would consider a disgrace."

"Fortunately for Lord Bidworth, he will not see much of his brother-in-law," said Mrs. Kennet, dryly.

"Unfortunately for Lord Bidworth, he will have to see a good deal of me before he manages to carry off Sibyl's neat little fortune."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the Earl of Bidworth is a notorious fortune-hunter and an all-round disreputable character. If he comes into the family, I get out. But," he added, after a pause, "he's not coming into the family. The Kennets are not going to add their name to the list of Americans who have made asses of themselves."

"You are assuming altogether too much responsibility on behalf of the Kennets, James," Mrs. Kennet said, with an irritating smile. "I think the Kennets would bear up even if you got out, as a moment ago you suggested you might."

"They might bear up, mother, but I'm afraid they would do very foolish things," answered Jim.

"Well," said Mrs. Kennet, turning away as if the interview bored her, and was to be brought to an end, "the time has hardly arrived yet, my son, when Sibyl's and my actions are to be passed upon by you."

"I am perfectly willing to leave this whole thing to Sibyl."

"Sibyl still has some respect for her mother's wishes," Mrs. Kennet remarked, severely, rising and moving toward the door.

"Mother," he said, and she turned with one hand on the door handle, "you sha'n't sacrifice her."

"Don't be silly," she replied, and passed out.

Her composure was more of a mask than she would have had her son guess, however; and the rest of the day she carried in her mind's eye the figure of a big, hard faced, determined boy, who seemed to block her passage whichever way she turned.

IV

THE Earl of Bidworth was one of those peculiar flowers of the British aristocracy that thrive best in the democratic United States. His debts and his profligacies were too much even for any self-respecting shipbuilder or ironmonger at home, and after helpless efforts to rehabilitate him with the fortune of some aspiring, ambitious middle-class tradesman, his people shipped him across the Atlantic in quest of some less fastidious American. He found, on arrival, that it was not so much a matter of quest as of choice; and, like the discreet young nobleman that he was, he took his time and looked over the field rather carefully. Sibyl Kennet

finally appeared to him to be the most available and eligible girl in every way, and he was not long in coming to an understanding with Mrs. Kennet, who was what he called "very satisfactory."

Sibyl herself he found rather difficult, and, taking his cue from the elder lady, he made no personal advance in the matter of his desires and intentions, leaving everything to her discretion. His gratification, therefore, was none the less keen for his enforced patience when he received Mrs. Kennet's summons to "a quiet at home dinner," as her note expressed it. The idea of such a function in itself made no very strong appeal to the young man, but he assuaged his feelings with the thought that quiet family dinners would play but a small part in his future life.

It was a curious little group that greeted him on his entering the bright drawing-room that evening. Jim Kennet, big, cool and unperturbed; Sibyl, fluttering and timid, and Mrs. Kennet, very gracious and self-possessed, but with inward anger, for she had come down stairs at half-past seven prepared for a crushing scene with Sibyl and Jim, but they had not appeared till the clock struck eight, and were then so amiable and apparently amenable that they had left a large amount of unexploded feeling on her hands, which she knew would make her uncomfortable the rest of the evening.

She almost forgave Jim later, for he made himself so agreeable that what had promised to be a very uncomfortable meal passed off most pleasantly; and it was with less hesitancy than might otherwise have been the case that Mrs. Kennet, with a playful admonition for them not to linger too long over their coffee and cigars, withdrew with Sibyl and left Jim and the young Englishman together.

When they resumed their seats, and the butler, after passing a lighted taper and refilling their liqueur glasses, had left them quite alone, Bidworth took two or three uneasy

puffs at his Havana and said: "You haven't congratulated me yet."

"Congratulated you?" answered Jim. "On what?"

"On my engagement."

"Your engagement?"

"Yes. Hasn't your mother told you?" asked Bidworth, rather blankly.

"Not to my mother?" said Jim. He couldn't resist it.

"No—no," stammered Bidworth; "to your sister."

"Oh, you are joking, Bidworth," laughed Jim.

"Joking? My dear chap, you don't seem to understand."

"I don't. Have you spoken to her?"

"No," said Bidworth, "but your mother and I have arranged—"

"Arranged what?" asked Jim, sharply.

"A marriage—"

"With my sister?"

"Yes."

"Without her knowledge?"

"Mrs. Kennet informed me that her daughter would not be adverse to such an arrangement."

"Well, as a matter of fact, she is extremely adverse to it, and so am I."

"And does that really make so very much difference?" asked Bidworth, smiling.

He had been rather taken off his guard at first by Jim's bluntness, but he didn't propose to let a prize slip through his fingers simply on account of a blustering schoolboy.

"All the wide difference between success and failure," answered Jim.

"Perhaps your mother will have something to say on that score."

"My mother has had all the say she is to have in this matter."

"I would prefer to hear that from her rather than from you," said Bidworth, leaning forward on the table and scrutinizing Jim with an insolent smirk on his face.

"Perhaps she has neglected to tell you, Bidworth, that when I arrived at the interesting age of twenty-one I became one of the trustees of my sister's not inconsiderable fortune," said Jim. "Meet me at my attorneys' offices to-morrow, and they will con-

vince you, I think, that any marriage arranged without my——”

“Shall we rejoin the ladies?” interrupted the Englishman, coolly pushing back his chair and rising. He felt that the big youngster opposite him really held the winning cards against him; that the game was up, and that all that remained for him was to cover his retreat creditably.

“I think we’d better not trouble them again this evening,” answered Jim, also rising, and standing with his broad back to the door. “I will make explanations for you that both my mother and my sister will understand.”

A deep flush spread over the Englishman’s face. “If it wasn’t for your age, you impudent puppy, I’d horsewhip you,” he said, angrily.

“Is it my age or your size that prevents?” asked Jim, good-humoredly, as he touched an electric button. “Call Lord Bidworth a hansom,” he said to the servant who entered a moment after.

“Yes, sir.”

“And fetch Lord Bidworth’s coat and hat.”

“Yes, sir.”

“This is young America’s idea of hospitality, I suppose,” said Bidworth, trying to carry the matter off lightly, though he was cursing within.

“No, this is young America’s idea of protecting his family,” answered

Jim. “I forgot to tell you that my attorneys are Messrs. Clarkson & Clarkson, 48 Nassau Street,” he added.

“Your hansom, my Lord,” announced the servant, returning.

He assisted his Lordship with his coat and then passed out in front of him along the hall to open the door, Jim following behind. No other word was spoken between the two, but Jim stood in the entry till the hansom aprons banged to viciously in front of the Earl and the carriage swung off down the street.

Mrs. Kennet and Sibyl were seated far apart in the drawing-room when he entered, and evidently little had passed between them, for Sibyl, pale and looking pinched and frightened, was on a sofa in a far corner, while her mother placidly turned the leaves of a book under the light of the big lamp.

They both looked up inquiringly as Jim came in, and Mrs. Kennet asked, “Where is Lord Bidworth?”

“He’s gone,” said Jim, tersely.

“Gone?” she asked, not understanding for a moment; then, catching a look in Jim’s face, she sprang to her feet and came very close, searching his eyes and finding what she sought.

“How dare you!” she cried, quivering.

“Oh, Jim!” sobbed Sibyl, burying her head in the cushions.



THE PROTEST

WITH Stella I stood in the hall, where the light
Was properly dim, as I noted with bliss;
And I made up my mind, when I bade her good-night,
I surely would steal from her lips a sweet kiss.
“Oh, what would my dear girl’s mamma think,” I said,
“If she knew a bold man were caressing you here?”
“Oh, my,” she replied, with a droop of her head,
“She never would hear of your kissing me, dear!”

ROY FARRELL GREENE.

JEWELS OF THE MAHARANEE

By Gilson Willets

MRS. CORNWALLIS-GREAVES was dining at the Carlton, where all smart London dined on Sundays, even Royalty. The Lord's Day, indeed, was the only day the Next King and his family, domestic and political, chose to dine in public, and the Carlton was the only hostelry thus patronized. This place was also good enough for Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, because she herself was smart, and because she had a daughter to exhibit.

That night, in his accustomed seat at the broad round table by the glass partition separating the dining-room from the palm-garden, sat the Next King. The Next Queen, as usual, was not with him. His party, however, included His Grace, the ducal brother of the Present Queen; also the Lord who in early life swore to win the Derby, become Prime Minister of England and marry the greatest heiress—and did. The greatest heiress herself sat beside him now, consuming asparagus at six shillings the single stalk, as were also the other ladies at that round table—nine bare-shouldered, bare-armed peeresses whose jewels doubtless made the actresses at the surrounding tables somewhat dissatisfied with certain non-platonic friends of theirs. Parenthetically, it should be stated that anyone who engaged a table a week ahead could eat in the public dining-room of the Carlton Hotel on Sunday evening. Hence, the presence of women of both kinds.

The guest of honor to-night at the royal table, sitting on the right of the Next King, was a young man whose European dress did not disguise his

Asiatic origin. He was a Hindu, a prince of India, the Maharajah of Baroda, and he looked it. Chocolate skin, pitch-black hair, and eyes like night—woman's eyes, languorous, dangerous eyes, that wandered, between the courses, to the table occupied by the blonde Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves and her party.

The blonde widow, on her part, did not once turn her expanse of blue eyes upon the Rajah; for of all the mothers among the four hundred diners in that room, the one most interested in the rich young Rajah was Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves. This Indian Prince represented her life's Diamond Opportunity. The thing was simple enough: Her daughter had beauty; the Rajah had more millions than any other man in India; and Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves had every worldly blessing save cash. And just now, her need of the one blessing that would enable her to retain all the others was extremely desperate. She had been living all the season on the edge of an abyss; money only, and lots of it, could save her from falling headlong.

She was on the verge of forty, she was noticeably fair, but none had ever accused her either of fatness or angularity. She had lived in England for ages, but her English was only skin-deep. At the core she would always remain Chicago, where, in the rash, dead days, she had married a man who wore a monocle. Her three-eyed husband brought her to London and set her on a social plane far above the belleship she had enjoyed in the Windy City. He himself then dropped to the level of tights and late suppers

and spent the fortune that his wife's father (who went to heaven soon after her mésalliance) had given her out of a million made in a patent roller-skate. Then death came and took the soul of the three-eyed man to the antipodes of the place attained by the roller-skate man. And Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves had passed her entire widowhood between training her daughter for a mighty wedding—a paradaical occupation—and dodging duns and debtors, which was hellish.

She earned hundreds of pounds introducing new-rich Americans to anestored Britishers; made thousands turning trade toward certain champagne, jewelry and dressmaking firms; came into commissions bringing fancy-waistcoated promoters and shabbily dressed capitalists to the point where they clasped hands and had a drink. Still, so precarious was the job thus given her by Vanity Fair that most of the time she suffered all the harassings, all the embarrassments, of a Becky Sharp living handsomely on nothing a year. Society saw a well-gowned woman fixed on a pinnacle; but darkness saw her floundering in the heap of unpaid bills, in which she was in danger of death by suffocation.

She lived the familiar social lie, but none knew, not even the daughter. She argued that a girl who is a candidate for a high matrimonial office should be allowed to think the *mater's* money-bags equal to any demand. Cash is self-confidence, lack of it self-consciousness. A young woman is bright or glum according to the way her gown compares with those of others. To a man her dress is a matter of indifference, so long as there is no offense in taste; but to the girl dress is the whole thing. In an old gown she lets a rich bachelor slip, while in a fresh gown she would seize him. If Alicia were to learn how her mother came by even their pin-money, were she to know that not a single gown in her wardrobe was paid for, that the owner of the house they rented, furnished, in Wales Terrace threatened eviction for arrears; that unless that vulgar Mrs. Goldstein,

wife of the Broadway shoe dealer, gave a check for her introductions in advance, they would not possess even a shilling for cab fare—if Alicia even suspected the flimsiness of the exchequer, good-bye to that fearlessness of eye, that poise of the head, that assurance of countenance, that ease and wit and independence that now qualified her for the rôle of princess.

They were dining to-night with the Brysons, Kitty Bryson and Alicia being friends so true that they never thought of falling on each other's necks and kissing. As Captain Bryson was paying for the dinner, Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, like the peeresses at the royal table, was eating asparagus tips at Carlton prices. Alicia, unlike her mother, had not the smallest personal interest in the Rajah, wealthy and handsome as he was, who sat yonder on the right of the Next King; therefore she turned the azure of her own eyes upon him, intercepting smiles that she guessed were intended for her mother. Alicia had never seen Chicago, yet she was no fool. Moreover, her mother was guilty of the common error of all ambitious match-makers: she said so much about "marriage, my dear," that the daughter turned sick at the thought of it. Alicia had met the Rajah often during his short visit in London, at balls and things, even at tea, and in his own Hyde Park mansion, but when it came to a tête-à-tête in a draped corner, His Highness's companion was not the fair Miss, but the blonde Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves.

And now, the asparagus was no more, and the dessert and the cheese and the fruit had been toyed with, and Captain Bryson was laying out sovereigns to meet the twelve inches of bill with all the carelessness of an officer who has only his pay to live on. And, with an absorbing interest, Kitty was watching the gold pieces vanish, as the wives of such men always do. Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, meantime, caught her daughter looking in the Rajah's direction, and in an undertone she said: "Don't stare

at him so, my dear. The secret of success is indifference."

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "The other day, mamma, you said that in his presence I acted like one dressed in ice."

"So I did, my dear. And I also remarked that he loved you."

"And I answered, mamma dear, that I wouldn't melt, even in the climate he hails from."

"Not his climate, my dear, but his love will thaw you. I know he loves you. Otherwise, why should he always act as if his hope of happiness was your aged, *passée* mother?"

"Because, mamma—because—I say, Kitty, why so woe-begone?"

"Oh, you see, dear," said Mrs. Bryson, looking around for an excuse, and finding it, "I fancy it's because the Maharajah is leaving us this week. He has entertained us all so lavishly in his Oriental way. And," she added, "he sails Saturday, you know, on the *Oceana*, for Bombay. And oh, dear, my Captain has been ordered to sail this week, too, for South Africa. I do wish he could get transferred from the military to the civil, so I could be with him always."

Both of which latter remarks took root in the brain of Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves and flowered instantly into a brilliant idea. Despite snares and schemes and strategies, she had not succeeded in capturing the Maharajah in England. What if she were to lay siege to the Oriental in his own country?

She turned to Bryson.

"How would you like a berth in India?"

No answer from Bryson; he was so intent estimating the portion of change that he could decently leave on the plate for the lordly waiter. But up spoke the sprightly Kitty: "Grand! Oh, great! May I hope?"

"You must take Alicia and me with you," laughed Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, a little nervously.

Kitty fluttered a trifle, and a shadow flitted across her face—but just then they all rose and filed out into the palm-garden, where they

gathered in big chairs around a little table, for coffee.

Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves sipped her *café noir* for a while dreamily. She was thinking of the beautiful girl who was even now making fun of the Maharajah's ardent, Oriental manner. She had trained this daughter for the social race, had entered her, and now here was a stake worth the winning. In other words she had held her daughter, as a broker holds a certain stock, till the bulls elevated quotations. She looked upon the Prince as the customer likely to pay the tip-top price; and now was the time to sell out.

Though the girl was persistent in her assertions that she would not accept the princess-ship, if offered by the young Oriental, the mother was equally determined to become the Prince's mother-in-law. Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, in fact, had something up her sleeve. She had resolved that the moment the Prince requested the honor of addressing her daughter, she would take the refractory young lady into a quiet room and there confess to her the story of her finances, show that ruin, loss of position, hard work, obscurity and a humdrum life stared them in the face, and make it plain that she, the daughter, could save the situation and make them both happy. Thus Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves intended to crush the formidable "No" the girl was saving up to hurl at the Prince the instant he said "wife" to her.

For Alicia had already gagged more than one persuasive millionaire with that selfsame negative. As the girl threw away one Golden Opportunity after another the mother would sigh, weep in secret, walk the floor, introduce some more people, wait and hope. But this season came the Prince from India; he admired her daughter; here was her Diamond Opportunity. She would move the earth to grasp it. To attach this Rajah and his money, to make him her daughter's husband, her own son-in-law, was an ambition to incite her supreme effort. His money meant everything to her; it

meant her position, her daughter's future, their very lives.

But it must be recorded that the most surprising thing about Mrs. Cornwallis Greaves was that she had become so accustomed to considering her daughter as valuable merchandise, as first-class property; so habitually did she associate rich men in her mind as so many bidders for her property, that she entirely overlooked the fact that she herself was still a splendid feast for the eye, that she was still what men call stunning. She never suspected that even the older bachelors and widowers could care for her, always finding delight in the thought that men courted her only for the sake of a word with her daughter—which latter boon she took pains to see was granted. As for the Maharajah, she took it for granted that he, even more than the others, paid attention to her only because she was the mother of the "Pearl," as he called Alicia.

Perhaps Captain Bryson perceived that the lady was throwing her daughter at the Rajah's head and that the Rajah himself had eyes only for the mother—perhaps he understood the state of affairs. If so, he never said anything to Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, never warned her. Neither did Kitty. In fact, Kitty and he were too much absorbed in the approaching visit of a stork to their nest to bother with the troubles of other people.

The royal party presently left their broad round table and scattered among the people under the palms. The Hungarian band descended from "Der Meistersinger" to "My Lady Lu," to suit the after-dinner mental condition of the guests. The Next King sat in a retired corner, thus developing the elastic quality in the necks of the curious, especially when he sent the First Lord of the Treasury across the room to bring over Lily, the actress. Lily came. As she had just returned from her American tour, the Next King probably wanted to know all about her turn-down by Philadelphia society. For more than an hour she and the Next

King sat alone in the retired corner; and all the birds of a feather in the garden accused the Next King of making a "bad break" in public, which was a way the birds had of expressing envy of the Lily.

Meantime, the Maharajah of Baroda, smoking a pale Indian cigar, sauntered among the groups, settling finally in the vacant chair between blonde Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves and her daughter. He smiled his brilliant smile, for he had dazzling teeth. He spoke to Kitty Bryson about a philopena they had eaten at a romp the other night, told them all stories of how the dreadful famine in India was reducing thousands of his subjects to skeletons while yet alive—and just then the band began banging, thumping, braying a Sousa march, and the Prince had to bend close to the ear of Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves to ask if she and her friends would honor him by coming to his house for supper.

In his Hyde Park mansion they found him in his native princely regalia, twelve yards of turban, a black velvet suit faced deep with gold embroidery, and more jewels than any woman in London ever wore at one time. Not that he was effeminate, for he told them wonderful stories of tiger and elephant hunts. He was also a warrior; that is, he said his sword was ever at the command of Her Majesty.

He wore a necklace of diamonds which alone was worth millions. Then over the snowy folds of his white cloth turban glittered a magnificent crown of rapahs, in the centre of which was a pigeon-blood ruby large as a man's thumb-nail, and glowing like a heart of love. Smaller rubies glowed amid the diamonds of the crown, like drops of blood imprisoned in a network of frost.

These jewels greatly interested Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves. "If you had a wife," said she, in an aside to him, "she would cure you of the habit of wearing all those baubles at one time, by taking most of them to herself."

"It would not be necessary," he said; "I have enough for both." And he ordered a Hindu servant to bring certain golden caskets. From these he produced fortunes in glittering beauties—sea-green emeralds from Asiatic Russia, great tear-like pearls from Ceylon, peacock-blue sapphires from Burmah, royal purple amethysts from the Ural Mountains, and, above all, a chain of black diamonds and rubies, more than a hundred and sixty stones, set in dull gold. "Upon this," said he, "no connoisseur has ever had the temerity to set a price. And this," he added, looking steadily at Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, "is for the Maharanee."

Then he suddenly turned to the young girl, who, at his suggestion, but principally because she knew it would please her mother, bedecked herself with all the Prince's jewels—all except the chain of diamonds and rubies set in old gold, which, he said, was for the Maharanee only. And with eyes a-glitter Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves viewed her daughter thus arrayed, and for five minutes she lived in Paradise. What if her heart's desire were to be accomplished! What if she were to win, and actually become the mother-in-law of that fortune in jewels!

Strangely enough, however, she kept turning her eyes and her thoughts away from the main fortune to the wealth represented by the chain of black diamonds and rubies, which lay exposed to view in the golden casket. That chain of stones alone, she calculated, would save her now at the very brink of the abyss, would wipe out her mountain of bills and keep her out of debt for several years. This bauble was for the Maharanee. That meant his wife, of course.

The table was loaded with strange and beautiful Oriental vessels, which he had brought from his own court, and which he presented to his guests after supper. Then he introduced a troupe of Indian dancers, who gave a magic and splendid performance. And while native musicians beat tom-toms for the performers, His High-

ness and Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves gravitated in a like direction and settled in the draped corner where they had several times before held tête-à-têtes.

What the blonde matchmaker said to the dark and handsome Prince, and what he talked back, are not worth recording word for word. But on the way home the lady said to her daughter: "Captain Bryson will be transferred this week to the civil list, and will receive an appointment as Political Agent to Baroda. It's short notice, my dear, but you know the Brysons have already invited us to accompany them to India. We sail next Saturday. We can stay over in Paris long enough to get a warm climate wardrobe; and we can catch the steamer at Marseilles."

"The *Oceana*, the steamer the Rajah sails by, of course," thought the daughter. "I see. Well, all the same, mamma's making a fool of herself, if I do love her. I'll go, but I won't own that Hindu for stepfather, not one minute."

II

THE Rajmahal, the new palace of the Maharajah of Baroda, was the finest in all India. With the hands of thousands of Hindus was it built, and for their labor they were paid two *annas*, which is four cents a day. And when it was finished the bill was several *crores* of rupees. The surrounding acres, for a mile in every direction, were laid out like an English park. Seventeen thousand men and women, servants of the Maharajah, kept this park evergreen—green even in time of famine, when all the rest of the State of Baroda was greenless and barren as a Sahara.

And even now, with the return of the Maharajah from his journey over the seas to visit the Empress of India, the only person to whom the Prince of Baroda ever bent his knee, there was famine in the land. For nearly two years there had been no rain, and the Maharajah's three million subjects could raise no crops, had saved

no money, and now they were destitute, and tens of thousands were starving to death. The Lord of the World, as they called their ruler, took care of as many as he could, some thirty thousand, giving them three meals of curry and rice each day. The representatives of Her Majesty, the Empress, looked after three hundred thousand more, and the rest had to eat the leaves of the trees, or lie down in the sun-baked fields, in the vast waste, and die.

Into this Hades on earth came the Brysons, and with them Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves and her daughter. They found the Residency, the big bungalow reserved for the Political Agent, completely furnished; the Agent who had been transferred to another district to make room for Bryson had simply put on his *topee* and walked out, leaving everything in perfect order and readiness. There were forty Hindu servants, a Mohammedan butler, a Parsee clerk, a squad of native police and a company of native infantry on the place. And when Kitty saw all these things the shadow was no longer upon her face when she looked at Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, for the shadow had been simply a natural one in the sky of a good housekeeper. She had supposed that she would have to spend weeks getting the house in order and the household organized, and she dreaded the presence of guests at such a time. But here was everything done for her by Hindus, who would not permit her to raise her hand or open her mouth, for the best servants in the world anticipated her every move, her every order. Inside the bungalow all was beauty and comfort and plenty. But outside, all was different. The whole world was the color of the dust of the desert. As far as the eye reached not a green speck could be seen. Rivers and streams there were none, but mere beds of parched earth, like the fields. Even the trees were now all naked, as in a Canadian Winter, though the thermometer said one hundred and twenty in the shade. The last leaf had been eaten. No,

there was just one tree still green-clothed. It stood in the very door-yard of the bungalow. Bryson's predecessor had kept this tree in leaf by driving off the starving peasants at the point of the bayonet, and drawing tons of water from the well to keep the roots of the tree alive. So that, the second morning after the Brysons' arrival, the bottom of the well was bared to view.

Whereupon Bryson sent the Mohammedan butler to the palace, two miles away, with a note telling the Maharajah of their plight, and asking if water could be brought in carts from the great well of the park. The Maharajah's answer was an invitation to the household—guests, servants and all—to come to the palace and live there till the breaking of the monsoon and the falling of rain.

Accepted instanter.

"This palace is considered the most elaborate specimen of Indo-Saracenic architecture in the world," said Bryson, learnedly, as they drove up to the state entrance. One hundred servants were lined up to receive them, and in the grand hall stood the Maharajah himself, with welcome on his lips. He was dressed now, as on that night in his London mansion, in native costume. His only ornament now was the priceless necklace of black diamonds and rubies set in dull gold, which he had said was for the Maharanee.

After luncheon he showed them the beauties of his palace—its rare, costly furniture, hangings, tapestries from all parts of the world, frescoed ceilings by famous artists, and its stone pillars and arches so finely carved that they seemed to be covered with lace. At last they came to the armory, where Captain Bryson began a lecture on the ancient armor and weapons that hung on the wall—and, somehow, the Maharajah and Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves slipped away together, and he led her down a corridor, saying softly: "I am glad we are alone, madame. There is a part of the palace you have not seen—the east wing, the Oriental section. I wish to show

it to you only." He looked at her, fire in his eyes.

Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves trembled. She felt that at last he was to speak of her daughter. Now, surely, she had not come out to India for nothing. Thoughts like lightning flashed through her mind. The moment she left him she would fly to her daughter, make her confession, throw herself on the girl's mercy, and thus persuade her to say "Yes" when the Prince asked her to be his wife, as he probably would after dinner. Still, she trembled, for, withal, she felt a vague presentiment of evil.

"If I might hope—" he began.

"You may, my dear boy," she said, promptly, taking his arm. "She loves you."

He opened a door, revealing a place of surpassing beauty, a portico surrounding a court that was full of palms and flowers, and baths let into the ground, Roman style, and banked about with snow-white marble; while around the portico, on rugs of soft, silken texture, reclined a number of women, all with shining chocolate skin, like the Maharajah's own. In the nose of each of these women hung a ring, or an ornament, which covered her mouth, as if to make kissing difficult.

Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves had turned pale. She had to cling to his arm for support. The Hindu women covered their faces with *sarees*. "They have never before seen a white person," explained the Maharajah. Several children, who had been playing amid the palms or splashing in the baths, stood still, as if petrified.

The Maharajah led Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves across the portico and opened another door; they passed in and stood in an apartment more beautiful than any of which she had ever dreamed. "This, madame," he said, "is the private chamber of the Maharanee, the favorite princess."

"The favorite princess!" gasped Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves, emphasizing "favorite." "So that is the meaning of Maharanee! Oh, why did Bryson never tell me! Those

women out there—they are your wives? Those children—they are yours?"

Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves was a strong woman. She was regaining her composure. "Your Highness, this is impossible. I wish to leave here at once."

"But, madame," said the Prince, with a smile, "you just said she loved me."

"But I meant—whom do you think I meant?"

"Yourself, madame."

Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves walked haughtily toward the door. Wild thoughts again flashed through her mind. Her daughter in this place? Was this the wifehood for which she had trained the girl? Visions spread like pictures before her of the effects of the financial crash that awaited her return to London, of the life she would have to give up, of the life to which she would have to descend, of her daughter's blasted prospects. She turned and walked back to where the Maharajah stood leaning with folded arms against a marble statue, a hideous Hindu god. She touched the chain of precious stones that hung massively on his breast. "Did you say that this was for the—the Maharanee?"

"I did—my dear." And he took the chain from his own person and twisted it round and round her neck.

"The yoke is very heavy," she said.

When the monsoon broke, and the rain fell, and Famine no longer stalked abroad, the Brysons returned to their bungalow, and Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves and her daughter went back to London, where she paid her debts, with interest.

When Mrs. Goldstein recently offered her a hundred pounds to introduce her husband to a peer of the realm, Mrs. Cornwallis-Greaves laughed in the woman's face. She drives in Rotten Row daily, in her own Victoria; but she never looks into the eyes of the daughter who sits beside her.

The Maharajah of Baroda is also spending the season in London.

THE COLONIAL DAME

SUCH lineage and such a name
 Were worthy of a better fame.
 This noble dame of high degree
 Does naught but quote her pedigree.
 It is so long, of such renown,
 It took a year to write it down.
 Her ancestors gained all their scars
 From wounds received in England's wars.
 Her grandsire was among the host
 The *Mayflower* brought to this fair coast.
 She'll tell you, with the greatest pains,
 What blue blood courses through her veins;
 Its source dates back so long ago
 She scarce recalls the time, you know.
 She holds so high her lofty head,
 She scorns the ground with haughty tread;
 In fact, her blood is all so blue
 She is most kind to speak to you.

ADELINE MAYO HOBART.



NOT UNCOMMON

"**M**R. BOOKWORM is a very uninteresting talker."
 "Yes. I've noticed that men who have a thirst for knowledge are
 always dry."



THE NECESSARY START

CHAPPY—She says I'm the first man she was ever engaged to.
 SHE—Well, she's got to begin on somebody, hasn't she?



LOVE is life, they say. But what life is no man knoweth.

TWICE OVER THE GATE

By Cecile C. Bacot

WE were lying at Egfa. Should anyone not know where Egfa is situated I will inform him. Egfa lies where garrisons begin to be disagreeable.

So we were quartered at Egfa. "We"—that is, the second squadron of the XX dragoons—five officers and the rest. Otherwise there was not much society there; a few more or less dignified young and old employers, with, for the most part, very dignified spouses. That was all.

At some distance in the surroundings were a few landowners, with whom, however, we came little in contact, probably on account of the long distance. But there was one of them who excited our interest and curiosity. It was a certain Count Zidenkovich and his family. Six months already the squadron was at Egfa, and none of us had got a glimpse, with even one eye, at a member of the family Zidenkovich.

The very day of our arrival at the new place we heard most extraordinary things. The Count was said to be a man-hater and the Countess as well, while the daughter was so haughty she would talk to her maid only through locked doors; these things and many others of the kind were told.

Yet our youngest lieutenant, the little Wenck, on his round of customary calls, also tried his luck at the Castle Zidenkovich. A nice time he had of it!

The Count was not receiving, much less the Countess, and young Countess Siza never received. Laughing, he told us the sad tale; laughing, we listened to it—but mad was every one

of us. And after that, little was spoken of the Zidenkoviches. Only the little Wenck had firmly resolved to get into the castle. We knew that. And what the little Wenck once got into his head he usually accomplished. That we also knew.

Who was Wenck? He was our youngest lieutenant. His name really was Anton, Baron of Wenck-Nelmerstadt—I believe his family came from Hanover—but for us he was only "the little Wenck." He was not so very small, rather above medium height, but, in spite of his twenty-three years, he looked as if he still belonged to school. A very handsome chap, the best of comrades and a brilliant horseman, he was our pet—our own Wenck. Always he had a ready purse, and his sword was a sharp one in need. Did he not fight one day with a chap from the ** Uhlan's because the latter pretended that our Captain's mare was not a thoroughbred?

Such was our little Wenck. Besides having so many good qualities, Wenck owned Punch. Punch was an Irish black-brown—an ideal horse. No ditch was too broad for him, no hurdle too high. We were out of it in regiment runs or army steeple-chases when Wenck rode Punch. The black-and-red sash was always the first at the tribune. "Yes, our Wenck and our black-brown," could be heard in the squadron, "are two bully good fellows."

The Zidenkovich castle lay in a large park that was enclosed by a man-high iron fence, along the inside of which ran a good-sized brook.

Well, one day the usual field exer-

cises stretched out toward the castle. The squadron was divided into friend and enemy. Little Wenck happened to be chased by a couple of enemies, and—whether with premeditation or not, who knows?—he rode straight for the iron fence, and a dig with the spurs sent horse and rider flying over. That no other horse would jump after Punch the little one knew well, yet he shivered at having so daringly broken into the peace of a home—of this one in particular.

Who could tell what adventures awaited him in the bewitched castle?

On he galloped, *ventre à terre*, through the park. The thickets seemed endless, the groups of trees impenetrable. At last there was light; he saw the fence opposite, beyond a broad meadow that was jolly ground for galloping; but his way led in front of the castle, and on the terrace were sitting three figures. Who they were he had no time to make out. He noticed only that they rushed forward, and he heard a frightened voice exclaim: "Don't jump! there is the brook!"

But too late! Already Punch was taking the double obstacle with a magnificent leap.

The exercises were over and we sat at dinner. The ride of little Wenck was, of course, the main topic of conversation. First, the two dandy jumps, and then—the possible consequences. A friendly man among the employers assured us that he formerly knew the old Zidenkovich, and that he would not rest until he had killed Wenck. Although I did not put much weight in those words, I involuntarily thought of my dueling pistols.

While we still lingered over our meal a groom appeared in a livery unknown to us and asked for the officer with the fine horse, adding that he was sent by the Count Zidenkovich. A groom—what could he want? Why should a groom have been chosen for a messenger?

"That means me," said Wenck.

"Well, then, you are to come to my master, the Count, and no later than to-day."

Great silence.

"Tell your master that I am the Baron Wenck, and if he wishes anything of me he shall come to me," thundered Wenck.

"Bravo, little one; bravo!" But that was only the first impression; then we thought it over; the Count was right. Wenck had disturbed the peace of his household, and no gentleman forgives that. Wenck owed him an apology. And, besides, the Count was an old man. To send his groom was queer, indeed, but then—well, reflections were idle now; we had to await the consequences.

At five in the afternoon, after the day's work was done, we were sitting in front of the café smoking cigarettes, when a strange-looking carriage drove across the market place.

It was an old-fashioned vehicle, such as might have existed fifty years ago. On the box sat a beardless old coachman, and beside him a hussar, with the customary mustache.

The carriage was so ancient-looking, so weather-beaten, that it was almost comical; but it was drawn by five black horses that caused our eyes to open wide with amazement; they were exquisitely beautiful, those five!

They came straight for us, making our hearts leap with joy as we watched them step along.

Right in front of our table the carriage stopped, and the hussar jumped from the box and opened the carriage door. Out stepped a gentleman about seventy years of age, in whom one could recognize the nobleman a hundred feet away, in spite of his old-fashioned costume.

"Pardon me for disturbing you, gentlemen. Allow me to present myself—my name is Zidenkovich."

We had all guessed it, yet could hardly believe it. Introductions followed.

"Please, won't you be seated?" Embarrassing silence, and then our visitor began:

"May I ask which one of you gen-

tlemen galloped to-day through my park?"

"I," said Wenck, quietly.

"Ah, Baron Wenck, is it not? I did not know whether my groom understood correctly. You might have harmed yourself—the gate is high."

Was this sarcasm? The old gentleman seemed too venerable, too dignified, to be other than sincere.

He apparently guessed our doubts, and continued:

"I asked you to-day to come to my castle because I am an old man who dislikes to leave his grounds. My groom must have delivered the message stupidly. Please forgive his uncouthness. So I had to come myself. The thing is, your ride has occasioned my daughter to fall in love."

"What?"

"Yes, to fall in love," said the man-hater, quietly.

"Please with whom?"

"With your horse. Therefore I wished to see you at my house, that we might discuss the matter over a cigar. Pray tell me, is the horse for sale?"

"Forgive me, Count," began Wenck, "that I have not yet found a word of excuse for—well, let us call it the liberty that I took this morning. It grieves me the more as I cannot even give you the chance of revenge by entering into your proposal. I have not the right to sell Punch. He is the present of a friend to whom I promised, on my honor, to keep the animal."

"That is too bad. I should have liked to gratify my child. Pardon my falling in upon you this way, gentlemen. I thank you, just the same, for your information, Baron Wenck. Good-evening, gentlemen."

With these words he re-entered his carriage, the hussar jumped on the box, and the five black steeds pranced away.

"And that is a man-hater!" said one.

"Well, he was not exactly over-polite!" another remarked.

"Not a word of 'come to see me.'"

"But his manners are great."

"Wenck will have to call."

"Of course; to acknowledge his call."

So it flew back and forth. The little one was to make a call—we all agreed on that—partly for the sake of etiquette and partly out of curiosity.

So the next day little Wenck rode in his best uniform to Castle Zidenkovich. He rang at the gate. Nobody opened. He almost tore off the bell. The gate remained closed.

"All right; what goes once will go again," thought the little one. A crack with the whip, a short run—but Punch refused. "What, Punch! are you not ashamed of yourself?" Then a dig of the spurs, and Punch jumped—jumped too short, and horse and rider landed in a heap in the park.

The former was quickly up and away, but the rider remained motionless. Then there came the light steps of a woman, and over the prostrate form leaned young Countess Siza.

There followed a long, dreary time for our Wenck. He lay ill for weeks and weeks at Castle Zidenkovich. That was hard for our lively friend. But he was nursed like the son of the house. And when, in the mornings, haughty Countess Siza put flowers into the sick-room, "so that he might enjoy a bit of the Summer," it seemed to him as if he dreaded to get well. For the Countess had wonderful eyes, and even without the flowers she brought the Summer's warmth into the room and happiness to him as well. And the old Count and Countess did not seem the least peculiar any more since he knew the cause of their retired life. One son had been brought home to the parents—killed in a duel. "And he was a fine officer," the old Count once related. "The other one would have been to-day as old as you. He died in Bosnia—not yet a full-grown cadet—the death of a brave soldier. And when one has had such misfortunes one no more fits in with the gay world—one only spoils everybody's humor. And my daughter must suffer from

it. The poor child mourns away her young life here."

Then came the first day when the invalid was permitted to sit in the park. And Countess Siza was beside him, making a sketch of Punch.

"Without the rider?" asked little Wenck.

"That is easier," she replied, and both were silent.

Then he remarked: "You once wanted to buy Punch, did you not, Countess?"

"Yes; but I do not like him any more."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because—because—or, rather, I like him better than before."

"Yes, Countess, I am not allowed to sell him, but to present him—?"

"How could I accept a horse from anyone?" she said.

Then another silence followed—a long one. At last he said:

"You could not—not from a stranger. But, Siza, I—I am hardly a stranger any more—am I?"

No answer. Only the trees whispered in the wind, and it became too dark to do more drawing. The groom was sent away with the horse.

"You should go back into the house now, Baron," suggested the Countess.

"You are out for the first time, you know."

"Just a little while longer, please; it is so lovely here. Now, how about the horse? I must not sell him, and from a stranger you cannot accept a present."

"Consequently, I resign," she replied.

And another soft whisper went through the trees. It must have been an angel's voice whispering to the two young hearts that they were no strangers to each other, for first their glances met and mingled tenderly, then their hands were clasped, and then—but it had grown so dark it was imperative they should go in.

But in the drawing-room later on it was bright, and there could be seen four happy people.

"Well, I thought you just wanted the horse," grumbled the man-hater, with wet eyes. "There goes the little witch and also takes the rider!"

And she did take him.

For our little Wenck and our Punch, they were a couple of fine fellows, and what once entered the head of the little one was quite sure to be accomplished.

We all knew that.



THE OTHER WOMAN

SHE holds within her slender, jeweled hand
Capriciously my fragile cup of bliss.

The years have yielded vintage but for this;
For this the tilling of the sunny land;

For this the purpling fruit was zephyr-fanned,

That she might sip the wine that is his kiss,
Its subtlest sweetness who must ever miss—

While I, in dim, neglected corners stand,
With aching throat and eager, parchèd lips,

Fearing to look, yet looking only there,
Lest carelessly, with wanton finger-tips,

She spill it, drop by drop, this fluid rare.

I still may snatch my own when she shall pass—
Mine, with her finger marks upon the glass!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

LORD AND LADY LADDISMEERE

By Edgar Fawcett

THEY had been in Rome over a fortnight when their first little pangs of discontentment were mutually confessed. Of course, these did not relate to the Eternal City. They told themselves that Rome grew more adorable every day, now that March had begun to steep in living emerald the Campagna, and that sometimes of an afternoon you could see small clouds of airy flame above St. Peter's, like tiny ethereal pyres of burning martyrs, and the views of sunset from the terraces of the Pincio were more ripely golden, more imperially red. No; they still worshipped Rome, and hated the thought of leaving it, though their itinerary, planned with strictest care, warned them that they must soon go northward.

They were two sisters, who had lived in New York all their lives. Their people had been gentlefolk, and their name was the old Knickerbocker one of Van Loo. In the early eighties they had been two little girls with fine prospects, living in a large house near Washington Square, with both their parents popular leaders of fashion, and Summering at Newport with their ponies and French attendants and all easeful accompaniments of wealth. Then their father had suddenly died, and soon afterward the horrible knowledge had broken upon their mother that rash and secret speculations had left her with a pinched purse. Foolishly, desperately, she fought her husband's creditors, and the fight, which lasted three forlorn years, at last killed her. She died on the bitterest terms with a rich brother, who had op-

posed the mad litigation into which she plunged.

Finally, the two girls, after fronting an outlook of financial peril which they were now quite old enough to understand, had found themselves harbored in what seemed like the sarcastic "safety" of twenty-five hundred dollars a year. With this they had rented a small uptown flat, and had lived there ever since, two young feminine Lucifers of pride as regarded all help from certain prosperous relations, though it should be added that no financial offers had surpassed a rather modest figure. Their kinsfolk, however, made much of them socially.

This was at first, when Adelaide, the elder, was slightly past the coming-out season, and Mabel, the younger, had just neared it. But, like so many New York maids who possess what is called position, yet for whom the bills of dressmakers are an affair of sad impediment, they retired after only a few glimpses of the glitter and bravery of festal halls. Later their days were spent on the banks of modish society rather than in its mid-stream. They saw it in perspective, and hence much of its silliness and hollowness grew sharply apparent. They had nothing to keep up in the way of convention or style, and therefore the saner and healthier energies of human refinement drew closer within their ken. They would not know everybody, but they found themselves knowing nobodies who were interesting for personal reasons alone, and not for the patrician or plutocratic glamour of their names. In other words, they

broadened, as so frequently happens, under the influence of a narrow bank account.

But this, to their great amazement, one day palpably enlarged. A few more annual hundreds were added to their twenty-five. The rich uncle had gone abroad after their mother's death, and they heard of his demise in Paris with scarcely a thought that the old fraternal wrath would so far abate as to leave them a dime. When the glad tidings came they looked at one another bewilderedly. It was late Autumn, and the leaves in the near Park, having yellowed, reddened and browned in the soft rains and drowsy suns, were now dropping to earth.

"We can go," said Mabel, as if in jocund approval of destiny. "We can manage it now, perfectly."

"Go?" said Adelaide. "Where?"

"To the moon, of course—where else? Only, *our* moon is Europe. We must be economical, of course, but we can manage it perfectly for four or five months." And Mabel, who was blonde, slender and exceedingly pretty, began a little improvised skirt-dance in the limited drawing-room.

"Don't!" reproved Adelaide, who was dark, serious and not in the least pretty, though well above deserving that fatal epithet "plain." "Remember, dear, that he's only just dead."

"He was horrid to poor mamma," flashed Mabel, "and he might have repented, being a bachelor, and have treated us two innocents a bit more generously. Still, heaven bless him for letting us see Italy! Of all places, I want Italy first. Then we'll go upward along the map, through France, to England. I'll have our voyage all planned out in no time. We'll take one of the German steamers to Naples and we'll take it—" Here Mabel threw back a haughty head, folding her plump arms in droll austerity—"by the middle of next month, Adelaide—not a day later! not a day!"

They took it, indeed, about a fortnight earlier.

They had pleasant enough accommodations at rather modest rates in

the Pension Zucchesi. Their two rooms were small, it is true, but then they had been accustomed to the meagre receptivities of a New York flat in West Sixty-something street. They could look out each morning, when they rose, upon the Via Sistina, and catch a glimpse of the old gray stone steps that lead up to it from the Piazza di Spagna, and see the yellow walls, as well, of that sagging, memory-haunted house where poor John Keats breathed his last.

Their *pension* was full of Americans, and at first they liked this, telling each other that it was a bond of pleasant reminder. But latterly the bond had begun to weary and irk them. Some of their fellow-countryfolk they found dull but quite unobjectionable. Others they were compelled to shrink from as piteously crude. In their way they were stanch patriots, and hence yielded reluctantly to the stress of severe condemnation.

"We might have gone to a German boarding-house," Adelaide would say; "but think how coarse the Germans can be when they're really ill-bred!"

"Or the Italians, for that matter," Mabel would add. "Their table-manners are Latin rather than Teutonic, if one pleases, but they suck into their throats trailing yards of macaroni quite as uncouthly as Herr This and Frau That gobble their sauerkraut from knife-blades."

Yet at last Mabel wailed out to her sister, one day, in droll frenzy: "That man Brindle, from Kansas, has had the impudence to ask me if I wouldn't go with him to the opera. Think of it!"

"Alone?" sighed Adelaide.

"Of course. He said he guessed we didn't want his sister along (that freckled girl who boasts that she rode on a bicycle fifty times round the Coliseum, and who is always chewing some sort of brown gum that she declares 'elegant for dyspepsia'), because three would spoil company!"

Again Adelaide sighed. "How on earth did you answer him?"

"Oh, I laughed in his face."

"No doubt he meant well," chided Adelaide, "after all. Besides, we shouldn't make enemies during the rest of the time we're here. It would turn the place more disagreeable still."

"As if anything could! That flashy little Mrs. Bixby, who says she comes from Texas—did you hear her giggle out to-day, at luncheon, that she thought the Laocoön in the Vatican beat any snake-story she'd ever read in a newspaper?"

Adelaide gave a pensive little nod. "The truth is, we shouldn't have come to this *pension* at all. We should have brought letters, which lots of our New York acquaintances would have given us for the asking, and got into quarters of a much better grade. However, it's too late now. When we go to Florence we *must* look up Mrs. Abernethy. She was mamma's dear friend, you know, and lives there now almost constantly."

"And as for England—" began Mabel.

"Oh, don't let us think of seeking out Ida, dear. True, she's our first cousin, and as children we were very intimate with her; but then, Ida has married into excessively fashionable circles, and our economies and humilities would clash terribly with all her smartness."

About two hours later Mabel came hurrying after her sister in the mellow dimness, and caught up with her just as she neared those superb cypresses that front the French College.

"My dear," said Adelaide, "why are you in such wild haste? I walked slowly, as you asked—"

"Oh, Adelaide," cried Mabel, quick-breathed and with dancing eyes, "a most amazing thing has just happened at the *pension*. There's a new arrival. Indeed, there are two. And who do you think they are? The Earl and Countess of Laddismeere. Positively! I read their names in the guests' book. They came a little while ago—very simply, in a cab. And I've just seen them; they stood talking together for a few minutes

in the reading-room. They both seem to be enormously nice. He is tallish and grayish, with long, thin legs (I begin to think the old John Bull type has wholly passed away) and shrewd but kindly eyes. She, in spite of a very plain gown (cut, by the bye, with suspicious modishness), is extremely blonde, almost as tall as the Earl, has a high nose, a tapering chin, a placid mouth, and moves with the grace of some great lazy bird."

"What on earth," mused Adelaide, aloud, "can have induced such people to lodge at the Pension Zucchesi? Perhaps—"

"I know what you're going to say," interjected Mabel. "No; you are wrong; they're emphatically genuine. This is what that puffy old English-woman, Mrs. Brockby, told me, with her usual reckless vernacular, a few minutes ago: 'My dear Miss Van Loo,' she said, 'the Hearl comes from one of the holdest families in Kent. I lived for years close by Clifton Park, his splendid 'ome, and I recognized 'im the hinstant I met 'im in the 'all. *She* was a Miss Dimsdale, very rich, and a niece of the Marquis of Staines. I 'aven't 'eard that they've been reduced in fortune, so it can't be *that* as brought 'em 'ere. Perhaps they just wanted a change. Our gentry are that way disposed sometimes. They get tired a bit, don't you know, of their ellergant and 'aughty lives.'"

From this view Adelaide soon dissented; there must be some other motive. But a little later, after having met Lord and Lady Laddismeere, with their easy approachableness and their evident but never condescending desire to be amused, both she and Mabel began to wonder if Mrs. Brockby might not, after all, have judged correctly.

The bevy of Americans were at first very much impressed. Then they grew accustomed to the presence of British nobility, and sometimes tempered with familiarity their previous awe.

"I suppose, sir," said Mrs. Bixby

to the Earl, one day when there was a full attendance at dinner, "that you're always called 'your Earlship' in your native country."

"Quite seldom," replied Lord Laddismere, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh, quite," smiled his wife.

"Tell me," Lord Laddismere then said to the lady from Texas, "is it really your belief that any such form of address is employed in England?" Already Mabel and Adelaide had observed how many questions he was wont to ask in his gentle voice, and how he would always address them to the feminine part of the *pension*, seldom noticing its male residents more than commonest courtesy required.

Mrs. Bixby flushed a little and tossed her head, with its glossy dark hair, that she wore elaborately ringleted in front and cut short behind. "Oh, I guess I hadn't thought much about *how* they called you," she said, pertly.

"Earlship" is hardly a word at all," Mabel could not here help striking in.

The Texan lady gave her a chilly glance. She had already decided that those Van Loo girls put on airs because they came from a big Eastern city like New York. "Perhaps you know more about the English aristocracy than I do," she tittered, stingingly.

"Come, now," said Lord Laddismere to Mabel, "how do *you* think I should be addressed?"

"I can tell you," said Mr. Brindle's bicycling sister. "Everybody calls you just plain 'my Lord' and your wife 'my Lady.'"

The Earl laughed and so did his wife. But their mirth sounded very sweet and inoffensive. Adelaide, especially, was always watching for traces of hidden pride or ridicule in it when it came, but she could never find the least.

"Oh, you Americans!" The Earl continued to laugh, and he lifted one delicately shaped hand as if playfully remonstrant. His eyes again met Mabel's, and she impulsively broke out:

"Of course, you are called only 'my Lord' by servants and others of the lower classes. For anybody else to do it is in very bad taste."

"Quite right, Miss Van Loo," said Lady Laddismere. "We wish nobody else *would* do it."

"It wasn't thought bad taste in England till rather lately," sniffed a certain spinster of advanced years, who came from a remote town in New Hampshire, hated everything English, spoke with the rasping notes of a katydid, and knew a prodigious amount concerning Italy and many other countries besides, though she had landed in Europe hardly more than a month before.

"Ah, I think you're by no means in error there," said Lord Laddismere; "but that is one of the deformities we've outgrown." The sharp-tongued spinster's name was Miss Titchitt, and he always seemed specially to delight in her snappishness. "Perhaps you think we have many others it would be as well had we survived?"

"Certainly I do," concurred Miss Titchitt. "For instance, making your footmen, as you call 'em, powder their hair. That's *too* awful!"

Everybody laughed.

"And paying the members of your royal family thousands and thousands of pounds a year for doing nothing but assume to be better than other folks. And having fags at your boys' public schools. And giving your Archbishop of Canterbury seventy-five thousand dollars a year, besides two or three big palaces to live in. And—" But here Miss Titchitt paused and used her handkerchief rather turbulently. She had caught cold the previous day while prowling about the vaulted aisles of St. John in Laterano.

"How wonderfully good-natured they are?" said Adelaide to Mabel, when the sisters were again alone together. "It isn't so much how they stand it all," she pursued, in her meditative way, "as *why* they stand it all."

"Mystery unfathomable!" replied

Mabel. "But I'm sure they feel we're different. Aren't you?"

"M—yes. They've asked us to go to the Villa Borghese to-morrow, and Lady Laddismeere said it would be 'only a party of four.'"

"If it were not for your funny scruples, Adelaide, I'd certainly tell them——"

"About Ida, and our New York 'position,' and all that? But you've promised me you wouldn't, and it's far best."

Mabel bridled a little. "We're as good in our country as they are in theirs."

"No, we're not. They're rich and influential. We're neither. Besides, they never talk about themselves; let us be equally reticent. And then, recollect that they're no doubt like hundreds of their fellow-nabobs. They may recognize that we're American ladies, and not like Mrs. Bixby and Miss Titchitt and all the others. But that means very little to the high-born English swell. He's accustomed to refinement and good breeding in legions of the middle classes."

Next day Adelaide and Mabel drove off in a hired vehicle with the Laddismeeres, envied, as they well knew, by a handful of intent watchers. If the Villa Borghese were hemmed in, like certain other palatial Roman museums, by narrow and often filthy streets, its interior would still be fascinating. But the great Park, with its glorious ilexes, for long has been reckoned a frame of incomparable charm for this noble relic of a ruined race. After viewing all the art beauties inside the structure our little party strolled among the natural beauties outside. Mabel walked with Lord Laddismeere, Adelaide with his wife. The sisters' English companions made admirable guides, having often visited the place before. The Countess had not before arrayed herself half so finely as to-day, and smart clothes became her tall figure and undulating lissomeness of movement. She was delightful, Adelaide thought, when she spoke of this famed domain of dead princes, but a little tedious when

she lapsed into questions about American maids, wives and widows, their habits, preferences, ideas, deficiencies or aptitudes. With the Earl Mabel found it quite the same. Possibly each damsel might have been won into elucidating responses if any personal queries had sought to discover their own particular standing, relationships and associations in their huge native transatlantic town.

"But no!" exclaimed Mabel, as the girls afterward privately discussed this subject together; "they don't seem to care a whit who *we* are. They appear to regard us merely as specimens of a foreign civilization who can give them 'points' as to certain general national surroundings."

"Precisely," agreed Adelaide. "And the information must relate to our own sex in America, or their interest in it at once palls. I confess, Mabel, that all this has begun to irritate me. I feel as if we were both being coolly and adroitly *used*—for what purpose heaven alone knows—just like the other denizens of this depressing *pension*. Well, the irritation won't last long," Adelaide continued, "for they are going away on Tuesday next."

"Yes," Mabel answered, "the Earl told me. To Bellagio, of all delicious spots! And poor we shall only see the Lake of Como from the train! I wonder if they will ask us to 'look them up' when we get to London in May."

"Highly improbable," negatived Adelaide. And yet, on Tuesday, just before their departure, the Countess handed her card to the elder Miss Van Loo. On it was engraved "The Countess of Laddismeere, Belgrave Square."

"I didn't quite like the way it was done," Adelaide commented later.

"Oh, I don't know about that," vaguely objected Mabel. "You see, they were in a hurry for the train, and their luggage had been delayed. The Earl saw her give you the card, and nodded and smiled at me as she did so."

"Yes; but, somehow, her manner—"

"Is *her* manner, Adelaide—sometimes vivacious and sometimes dreamy, as if she were half-asleep. I mean those occasions, you know, when she talks *over* you, as it were, with her fluty voice, as if she didn't expect you to answer, and wouldn't exactly hear you if you did. Anyway, if our limited wardrobe isn't in rags by the time we reach London, we may drop in for a cup of tea—didn't she warble something about a cup of tea?—and behold her girt by all her Belgravian glory!"

At Florence, a week or so later, the sisters easily fell in with Mrs. Abernethey, their mother's old friend. Though a faded lady, she yet brimmed with vitality, and gave "dear Lydia's girls," as she called them, the warmest welcome. Florence, therefore, unveiled its captivations to the newcomers under conditions quite different from those that had invested their stay in Rome. They lodged cheaply but well, and tucked, as it were, beneath either arm of the benevolent old Europeanized American, saw much of breathing and interesting humanity besides those painted specimens that line so nobly the walls of the Pitti and Uffizi galleries.

When April had begun to fill Florence with the flowers from which her name is borrowed, and the sisters bade farewell to their invaluable helper, they looked upon the huge French metropolis, whither they would now journey with all possible expedition, as a place where pre-instructions would arm them against every awkward mistake. Mrs. Abernethey had pressed upon them quite a packet of introductory letters, but none of these, on arriving in Paris, they thought it wise to use. There would be time only to "see things," they concluded, for, according to their planned-out foreign sojourn, they had but a fortnight in Paris, another fortnight in London, and then—home. They had already exceeded their proposed Italian residence, and their

funds had now assumed that commanding sort of pathos which belongs so peculiarly to a dwindled purse.

The weather being exquisite in Paris, they tore themselves with difficulty from those pomps of structure and space which always affect so peculiarly persons who see them for the first time. The weather was dull and windy when they reached London, and they felt that the vaunted loveliness of a British May was based on air—and damp, raw air at that. They were lucky, however, in the lodgings they soon secured, after a day or two, at the lordly but inexpensive Langham. Quite near it, in quiet old Weymouth street, they later secured most desirable apartments. A little later the sun broke out, and then they saw a new London, with its countless squares and its expansive park all full of twinkling greenery, and with strangely picturesque commingling of splendid homes and dreary hovels.

Both were eager for "sights." They began with Westminster Abbey, like true Americans, and ended with Madame Tussaud's wax-works. Eight or nine days were thus passed, and at length Mabel declared to her sister that the limit had been reached, and she would spend the remainder of their pilgrimage in leisurely walks.

"How about Lord and Lady Lad-dismeere?" said Adelaide, with a sly smile.

Mabel started. "You've never even hinted of our going to Belgrave Square."

"No," said Adelaide, with a pretty turn of satire; "I knew how any suggestion of the sort would shock you."

"It—it frightens me now," returned Mabel, with a comic huddling together of the shoulders and a brief but tight closure of the eyelids. After a mock shudder, she resumed: "That day in Hyde Park! The glittering smartness of the carriages, the luxurious toilets of the women! Oh, it was overpowering! As I told you, we might come across *them* any moment. And I had a fear that if we did—"

"They wouldn't have bowed to us?" Adelaide asked, quite sharply. "Well, perhaps they wouldn't. Do you know, my dear, that you're dreadfully snobbish in your talk? Well, let it be settled. We will *not* call at Belgrave Square."

"Yes, it's better we should not," murmured Mabel. "In the first place, you know, we haven't a decent rag between us to go in."

"Oh," bristled Adelaide, remembering a few careful but rather attractive purchases in Paris, "I'm not so sure about *that*."

Then followed a little series of mild quarrels, which "broke and formed" incidentally, like Tennyson's "flickering fairy circle," till Adelaide averred that, since Mabel was dying to pay the visit, she would go, and Mabel retorted that, since Adelaide was concealing her true wishes under a diplomatic deceit, *she* would consent to be *taken!* This droll compromise resulted, one afternoon, in two well-dressed maidens hailing an empty cab as it came vagabonding along Portland Place and having themselves driven, for the modest sum of a shilling and sixpence, to one of the handsomest houses in Belgrave Square.

As they alighted, they perceived that other cabs, and some fine private vehicles as well, were stationed near at hand. A gigantic footman in sombre livery, with powdered locks, opened the heavy oaken door for them before they had time to ring. They passed into a wide hall lined with prints, and at a curtained inner entrance another gigantic footman asked their names. "The Miss Van Zoos," this braided being then bleated forth, and at once revealed a spacious room full of mellowed richness, where ladies either sat or stood in groups, the bright hues of their dresses and hats making of the place a bewildering kaleidoscope of color.

Nobody specially noticed the sisters as they moved forward. It is always like that in the great London drawing-rooms. If you are known, you are observed; if not, you pass for

one of the many nobodies who constantly drift everywhere. But soon a tall lady detached herself from a certain group. She was clad in a glimmer of lilac and rose, with pearls round her throat and a butterfly of pearls and rubies in her massed light hair. She looked very handsome, but not at all like the Countess of Laddismeere they had met in Rome.

She gave her hand to both. She was smiling, but did not seem as if she meant the smile by any means for them. No trace of surprise showed itself on her fair, delicate face.

The girls, each equally struck by her loveliness, each equally chilled by her unstirred serenity, found it hard to answer with due glibness the little flow of commonplace questions by which she addressed them. But presently Mabel grew bolder, and spoke of Florence and the refreshing change secured there after the Pension Zucchesi.

Then the faintest of momentary shadows crossed their hostess's face. "Dear place, Florence, yes—dear place. Except in Winter, you know. It's quite too dreadful then. . . . You're not going so soon, Mrs. Willoughby?" And she glided away from the sisters toward a young woman with an angelic face and a fluffy white boa.

Would she return? Adelaide and Mabel exchanged a puzzled glance. Silvery voices were sounding on every side of them—such voices as you hear only from the English feminine throat. They could not help thinking, as they surveyed this concourse of winsome creatures—for nearly all had some mark of beauty, and some were beautiful beyond cavil—of the numerous red-faced, ill-shapen, ugly Englishwomen whom they had incessantly met in the streets. But here was a different London—that of luxury, ease and almost perfect physical culture. A footman came to them with tea, which was continually being served, but they refused it. After a while they sought, half-embarrassedly, two seats

placed against the wall, and dropped into them, not knowing of any other course to take. Near by stood a table loaded with small precious things in bronze, old silver, rare china, jade, ivory, enamel, and heaven knew what else. For lack of other occupation they fell to admiring these and chatting about them. On the other side of the table sat a large, dowdy lady, with an expression of pain on her full face, which vanished into a smile as Mabel squarely regarded it.

"I'm afraid I look rather seedy," said the lady, and she gave a sad little chuckle that scarcely passed for a laugh. "It's my shockin' gout. Some unexpected twinges came on me, and I just flopped down here for a minute. Yes, Hermione and her husband have a lot of jolly knick-knacks. A poor old woman like me envies them, poked down into the country three parts of the year. I tell 'em they're the worst gadabouts I know, but, bless my soul! I envy 'em, just the same. Those nasty doctors—what beasts they are, to be sure!—they keep me down at Ramsay Castle through December and January—fancy, now! They say I can't stand the journey to Italy, but they never seem to doubt I can stand payin' their infernal bills. There! I really believe my foot's better. It was one of those ungodly twinges I sometimes get in it." And here the old lady cumbrously rose, with one hand clutching a thick, gold-headed cane.

"Oh, my dear Duchess!" cried a handsome, dark girl in a black dress that seemed one electric flame of sequins, "where *have* you been hiding yourself?" And youth and age went moving off, in trenchant contrast.

"She a *duchess!*" whispered Adelaide.

"Yes," replied Mabel; "who'd have believed it?"

"Perhaps she's a little off her head, as they say here."

Mabel sighed. "What on earth are we to do? Sit here like this, without knowing a soul?"

"It looks very much as if we must."

"I'm beginning to think, Adelaide——"

"Well, what?"

"That Lady Laddismeere isn't treating us politely."

"Perhaps she'll come to us again."

"She's already passed us twice."

"I know," said Adelaide; "but then she appears to have her hands full in the way of entertaining."

"She might introduce us to somebody, however."

"I don't think it's done in the sets where she moves."

"But we are foreigners," Mabel announced, with a note in her voice that brought a look of uneasiness to her sister's face.

"Now, don't get angry, Mabel," she pleaded.

"I *shall* get angry before long," said Mabel, rather low down in her throat.

"And say something you'll regret afterward."

"Now, don't be silly. There are some things one oughtn't to stand."

Quite a long time passed. The guests were beginning to leave. "I can't expect many more people to-day," the sisters heard Lady Laddismeere exclaim. "Everybody's going on to Lady Lorrimer's great crush in Eaton Square."

The room was now nearly empty. "Let's pretend," said Mabel, rising, with a grim look on her bloomy young face, "that *we're* 'going on' to Lady Lorrimer's crush. I think it's about time we did something a trifle new. We've stared at that table till I feel as if I should be able to identify every article it holds if I never saw one of them again till I was ninety."

The last guest here slipped between the doorway draperies after a warm hand-clasp from Lady Laddismeere. At this the Countess turned and approached the sisters, who were now both standing.

"And so everybody," she said, in sweet, bland tones, "has deserted me except you."

"Except ourselves," Mabel said, all boldness, but all composure as well,

"whom you thought it good breeding to desert."

Before the girl's quiet stare Lady Laddismeere recoiled, though slightly. She lifted one slender hand, then let it fall. For a second she closed her eyes, whispering, with a shocked hush: "Good breeding!" But immediately she went on, with a curious mixture of pained yet amused levity: "How droll! how remarkably droll! Really, you Americans are so different from us! When we think people ill-bred we don't tell them so."

"What do you do?" said Mabel.

"Oh, we put up with it, I suppose." Lady Laddismeere was now giving some touches to her flaxen hair before one of the big mirrors. In this way she had partly averted her face. But on a sudden she turned again. "I say, Miss—er—Mabel Van Loo—that is your name, isn't it?—I——"

"You know my name and Adelaide's perfectly well. Don't assume that you do not. It isn't very convincing comedy, though I admit you have a talent for playing parts. You met us in a cheap and rather common little Roman *pension* where we went by mistake."

"Oh, quite so—yes."

"But *you* couldn't have gone there by mistake. However, you were civil to us and asked us to come to see you when we arrived in London. We came, and have found a wholly opposite person from the affable gentlewoman with whom we chanced to fall in on the Via Sistina. We are strangers within your gates, and we both feel that you have got us inside them on somewhat false pretenses. That's all. Now we'll leave them."

Mabel took her sister's arm, and they were walking toward the exit, side by side, when Lady Laddismeere gave them pause.

She was very indignant, but temper ranked among her abhorrences. She thought it as vulgar as a pair of green gloves or a magenta sunshade—which meant, with her, profound depths of antipathy.

"You're quite right. I did give

you my card and ask you to come here. But this chanced to be my 'day,' and I don't want you to think me rude—I am *never* rude—in saying that I truly didn't know what to do with you."

"You mean," said Mabel, "that you didn't care to show us the commonest courtesy."

"Mabel, dear," pleaded Adelaide, softly, "let us go." She tried to draw her sister nearer to the door, but Mabel stood firm.

"I may have been a bit neglectful," began Lady Laddismeere, "but——"

"You were more," said Mabel; "you were impertinent."

"Mabel! Mabel!" sighed Adelaide.

Lady Laddismeere broke into a peal of dulcet laughter. "Dear, dear, how enormously funny! As soon as I see my husband I shall tell him that this is how I'm abused for letting him drag me to that horrid *Pension Zucchesi*. You see, the poor Earl went there to finish his book."

"His book?" fell from Adelaide.

"Oh, I hope I can talk to *you*, Miss Adeline—no, excuse me, Miss Adelaide—without being so fearfully clapperclawed! My husband conceived the foolish idea, you know, of writing a book called '*American Women Abroad*' He is quite without the writer's talent, as I've often told him. He had nearly ended his book when he became possessed by the idea that an intermediate chapter, as he called it, was necessary. He must study more types of a certain American feminine sort. So I was dragged last Winter to that shocking place. This explains the mystery of our going there—a mystery to which your polished sister has just alluded. You were both very nice—then. Of course, you were not the same as the others——"

"Neither were we the same as the others to-day," cut in Mabel, icily. "That is, in your own very valuable opinion, which you were vulgar enough to make us understand. Literary incapacity may be pardoned, but social politeness is expected even from imbeciles."

She had gone rashly far, as the honest American girl will sometimes do. She had told Adelaide that she would keep herself in decorous leash, but there had been something about the ironic raillery of this woman—something so much more acrid and irritant than open insolence—that every nerve of antagonism in Mabel's ardent and wholesome young temperament flew to arms. A passionate impulse had seized her to pierce the detestable nonchalance, the deep veneer of indifference and superiority by which at every turn she had felt herself baffled. She wanted, as it were, to draw blood. And this time she drew it.

Pale, her lips tremulous, Lady Laddismeere exclaimed:

"I don't remember that I ever gave you any card!" The sweet voice was harsh and shrill. "If I did, it was the merest hollow form. You chose to push yourselves in here, and I treated your daring as it deserved!"

It was Mabel's turn to laugh now. Every trace of her ire had vanished. She felt her old merry self again. She could almost have kissed the woman in gratitude for having let her dash to earth all the fripperies and trumperies of former treatment.

"Good-afternoon," she said. "Of course, that talk about the card is mere trashy bravado. But it's so delightful to see you in your true colors! Tell your husband to write something else, and call it 'Lady Laddismeere at Home.' He needn't 'drag' you anywhere to do it. He'd find the full material in his own drawing-room. I'm not a bit annoyed now. Thank you very much for your hospitalities. They've been peculiar, but none the less interesting."

A good deal of Mabel's final speech had been heard by a gentleman who entered during its delivery, his foot falling noiselessly on the mossy carpet. This gentleman was the Earl of Laddismeere. He wore a topcoat with big pearl buttons, and looked like a man who had just jumped from some sort of a trap after a drive in

Hyde Park. Lord Laddismeere may or may not have known how to write a book, but he had a very quick perception in many other ways, and, moreover, he was extremely well acquainted with his wife.

Vaguely defining the situation, he may, more or less, have sympathized with her. But he did not dream of treating the sisters otherwise than urbanely. Good manners were natural to him; what faults he had lay deeper.

"Now, come, you mustn't think of going away with any unpleasant feelings," he said, pressing Mabel's hand in his right and Adelaide's in his left. "Let me try and throw some oil on the troubled waters. What, please, has Lady Laddismeere been doing? Tell me, so that I can scold her soundly."

"What have I been doing, indeed!" cried Lady Laddismeere, almost as if in straits for breath. "I've been getting myself insulted, Algernon, by one of these young American persons, and I beg that you will have the goodness not to detain them any longer."

"With your permission, Lord Laddismeere," said Mabel, "I will explain what has happened." She did not wait for such permission, however, but went straight on. She omitted no detail; her recital was the soul of accuracy. Once or twice, as she paused, Adelaide, whose meeker spirit had been roused, would supply certain details. The girls both spoke swiftly, and it seemed as if the very fidelity of their narration tightened Lady Laddismeere's compressed lips and increased her unwonted pallor. She was plainly striving to keep silent; but at last, with an imperious wave of one hand, she broke out, in a half-suffocated voice:

"Let this end, Algernon. It must—it shall! You've surely heard enough to realize the actual truth."

Lord Laddismeere went over to his wife.

"My dear Helen, you are oddly unnerved."

"Come, come!" implored Adelaide,

plucking at her sister's gown; "you see that he doesn't side with you. Please come!"

"Wait a minute," said Mabel. "I want to make quite certain if he will let us go like this."

Her voice was just loud enough for the Earl to hear it. He raised both hands and gave a despairing shrug.

"Ah, young ladies, what *shall* I say? I had come home to bring my wife a most happy piece of news—"

"The Cabinet appointment?" shot Lady Laddismeere, momentarily forgetful of her woes.

"Yes."

"Ah!" she drew in a deep breath, and the color came dimly back to her blanched cheeks. It was the dominant passion of her life to see the Earl a Cabinet Minister.

"There—that makes you feel better, doesn't it?" Lord Laddismeere said. He took both her hands and held them while he pursued: "I saw Matlock in the Park just now. Only a few words between us, my dear, but they almost meant a promise. And Matlock, you know, can just now do almost anything with the new appointments. . . . There, pray go to the young ladies and tell them that you regret there should have been any misunderstanding—"

"Never, never!" she quivered, snatching away her hands.

"You hear, Mabel," urged Adelaide. "Now you'll come, will you not?"

"The Marchioness of Matlock," bleated a voice outside.

Into the room, at this announcement, swept a lightsome and elegant figure. Of all the women who had departed, none was handsomer than she, though not a few were prettier. She held her head proudly, but not haughtily, with the air of a woman who knows that her place is high, but who steers by instinct between foolish arrogance and false humility.

She went hurrying toward Lady Laddismeere and put out her hand. "I'm really so sorry to get here late! I could tell you lots of fibs, if I chose, about unforeseen impediments and detentions; but—"

"Ida!" dropped from Adelaide, louder than she knew. The girls were scarcely three feet from the doorway, Mabel having yielded at last. In an instant, the Marchioness, hearing her name, turned and surveyed them.

"No, no!" she exclaimed, and then hastened precipitately across the room.

"Yes, yes! It *is* you! Cousin Adelaide! Cousin Mabel! Where on earth did you come from? Here in London, and I don't know it! How dreadful of you!" She kissed them both again and again. "Ah, Lord and Lady Laddismeere are luckier than I! Do you know, girls, I'm furious at you both! Such playmates and such chums as we three used to be in New York, and at your beautiful Newport home, too! Why, Addie, dear, you're crying—and, Mabel, so are you! I—I'm crying myself—see! Is it because I never wrote? Oh, I'm so bitterly ashamed! But then, one of *you* should have written. It isn't that I haven't often, often thought of you, but remember what a wretched scribe I always was. Ah, but it's something else! What, girls, what? Tell me!"

Adelaide's tears had now become sobs. But Mabel, crushing down her agitation as best she could, brought out, brokenly:

"Oh, Ida, please—forgive—us. It's most—unseemly—we know. But something horrible has happened to us here—here, in this very room. Lady Laddismeere and her husband asked us in Rome to come to see them when—when we reached London. But to-day *she* has just—denied—denied, Ida!—that she gave us her card—said that if she did so it was the hollowest form—that we chose to push ourselves in here and that she—treated—our—daring—yes, our *daring*, Ida!—as it deserved!"

The Marchioness of Matlock drooped her head for a moment. When she raised it her dark eyes were blazing at the Earl and his wife. Neither of them ever forgot that look—its rebuke and its contempt.

Both, indeed, had cause to remember it.

Then Lady Matlock put an arm about the waist of each of her cousins, and soon the trio were being rattled in her grand carriage to her near home—the old Matlock family mansion—in Grosvenor Square.

Lord and Lady Laddismere stood and stared at one another as the muffled clang of a closing door came to them from yards away. He was a man who hated scenes. "So much for my portfolio!" he said.

"To think of their being *her* cousins!" wailed the Countess.

"'M—yes. Devilish good form in them not to mention it," muttered the peer, with both hands in his pockets.

"Algy! you're terribly angry at me."

"Oh, no. I was never angry at a woman in my life."

"But you think I—"

"Behaved with a snobbery stupendous, my dear? Yes, I do."

"I'll write to Lady Matlock!" suddenly protested his wife. "I'll—"

"Write as well, my dear, to the Sphinx in Egypt. You'd stand just about the same chance of being replied to. The Marquis of Matlock is

to-day one of the most powerful men in England. I don't speak of his intimacy with the Royalties; that is power social, and I mean power political. He could have handed me that appointment as if it were a cigarette. It was a tie between Sir Audrey Melville and myself. I always thought the Marchioness liked Sir Audrey a little better than she liked me." Here he gave a dry little sound, between a cough and a laugh. "I'm sure she does, now," he added, "and that Sir Audrey will get the portfolio."

He did get it.

The Marchioness of Matlock had already issued cards for a great ball. Lord and Lady Laddismere were invited, but they did not go. Had they ventured to do so they would have seen Lady Matlock receiving her guests at the head of the grand staircase, her fine arms and neck laden with the magnificent family diamonds. And at her side they would have seen two girls, dressed in simple frocks and both so exceedingly frightened that neither had ever looked so pretty before. And all the while, when she made them acquainted with people, Lady Matlock would refer to them as "my cousins, the Misses Van Loo."



THE CORKSCREW

THE shining key that can release
The sunshine stored for Winter's mirth,
Unseal the shackles that confine
The festal spirit of the earth.

Old is the office that it holds;
It ushers in the marriage feast
And liberates the soul of song,
Or breaks the bondage of the beast!

It holds high place beside the board
In halls of state, in caves of crime;
Sets free a scourge of blight and bane,
Or dreams imperial and sublime!

ERNEST DELANCEY PIERSON.

THE SISTER OF A BEAUTY

By Ednah Robinson

SHE had kept us guessing all her life. As a baby she was extraordinary; as a child, an enigma; and she grew into a Beauty.

At five she had drunk poison, having taken a fancy to the color of it, and only the enormity of the dose had saved her for other perils. By eight she had run away some dozen times and had made one rudely curtailed experiment with matches and a can of kerosene. She had sold newspapers on the street before she was twelve, and before she was caught; had outraged propriety by begging at friends' doors and exposing them afterward. Before she was sixteen she had refused many offers, more than many another girl has during her whole life, and her success in mimicking her ardent lovers had won her recognition on the private theatrical stage. I used to talk blatantly to her about good taste, in those days, but it was wasted breath. "Why, it's fun," was ever her answer. But she was a Beauty, and I was the older sister, full of care for the younger—and full of love for John.

John was not in the Family, but hoped to be. If it had not been for the Uneasy Beauty, as he called her, he would have been her brother long ago, he declared. Anyone can guess that John is Irish. There was never much love wasted between those two. He thought her selfish, and his was the unique position of the only man she could not enslave. "Don't waste your wiles on me," he said to her, brutally, one night after I had refused, finally, to marry him before she was either settled or subdued.

"My only ambition is to be the *brother* of a Beauty." She never spoke to him again. She never will speak to him. I know the Beauty!

It was more of a surprise than a shock when she eloped. The man was Philip Winthrop, esteemed, steady, and poor enough to be a romantic figure in the Beauty's eyes. The Family drew a long breath and John put in an immediate plea. The charge mother had left me was off my hands; now would I name a day? My natural excitement gained me a respite, and after I had seen the Beauty the day seemed as far off as ever. There was the post-nuptial trousseau to be gotten—for me to get (is not Beauty always helpless?)—there was the house to be found, to be furnished, to be settled, the cards to be sent, the servants—my duties must have soured my disposition about then, for I had my first quarrel with John.

Six months after the elopement, our bell pealed furiously late one night, and an enraged Beauty demanded protection. Philip Winthrop was a miser, was no gentleman, was a—was a brute! The Family put her to bed and then stayed up all night drinking coffee. At six we sent for Winthrop, who came eagerly, and we unfolded our plan for him: Outraged dignity, reserved silence, hurt pride—in other words, he was to be unapproachable. We were telling the winds not to blow! She might take it in earnest! All he wanted was the Beauty back again. He was as much under her thumb as if he were really one of the Family.

The Beauty did go back, intermittently, for another six months, and

we grew accustomed to be wakened at midnight. Then she left him for good, and there was that in her eye that made us believe it. But what to do with her? A Beauty in the family is like gunpowder in the house—one never feels safe. So the Family held a consultation, and a committee approached the Beauty, who had in the meantime been thinking for herself. She would not listen to the plans. Separation? She would not even use his name. She insisted upon a divorce, but had a superb contempt for alimony. He could keep his old money. The Family had enough for her. And she might as well tell us, she had discovered her vocation—she was going on the stage! Our Puritan blood burned with the shame of it; the masculine half of the Family said “Pshaw!” in a different language, and the feminine half wept. John was singularly silent.

Picture the futile waves breaking against granite cliffs, and you see the Family. “Would we let her touch his money while the estate could support us all? There should be a division of the property,” and there was, forthwith, against all previous judgment. The Beauty’s share was turned into cash and her time was devoted to stage-managers and a study of Shakespeare. It was to be the “legitimate.”

All this was not done easily, and the Family was split into warring factions. Everybody had said something or done something against somebody else, and everyone was outraged. The men took to the clubs and the girls to their separate rooms. Those were horrid times, but we anticipated worse.

After it was over she told us about it. There was one manager, even more enthusiastic than the rest, who declared her beauty alone would win her fame, and, coupled with real ability—she would not say genius—hers would be a short cut to recognition. She had invested her money in his company, and they were to go on the road, the Beauty starring. We wished her luck, feebly, and after she had

left we buried the Family hatchet. Might it ever stay rusty!

It does not take long for some things to happen. The company played to a crowded house in Oakland, where we lived, to a critical house in San Francisco, to slim houses in Portland and Seattle, and went to pieces in Denver, where the Beauty forsook her companions and escaped from the ruins with her favorite *Juliet* gown and just money enough to bring her home.

Even then the Beauty would not be planned for. Our offer of a small allowance, made up by Family subscription, was accepted, but for the home she was not ready. She had accepted the Fisks’ invitation to spend the Winter with them in San Francisco, for Oakland was dull. It was at the Fisks’ that she had met Philip Winthrop, and he was still a regular visitor there, so the Family raised its eyebrows and hoped unutterably. Rumors, from time to time, blew across the Bay. They had met, they were friendly; he was disposed to be loverlike, she gracious; he had driven her to the Park, she was wearing his ring—when there was a sudden outbreak, in which Winthrop took the initiative. My lady’s caprices had been one too many; he would go no further.

She came home wearily, leisurely, and I was her confidante. “Life was hollow, a mockery—and the bills! Could I, would I, pay them? I was so good!” I countermanded the order for my trousseau and tried to explain to John without implicating the Beauty. We were to have gone East in the Fall together, but that was all ended. How leave the Beauty in this new, melancholy mood of hers? And the bills meant no clothes for me that year. John pleaded, then stormed. I knew he had to go? And I would let him go? Just because a—I had to put my hand over his mouth, and he would not even kiss it. Oh, John was angry!

So he went East much sooner than he had planned, and the Beauty developed a sudden longing to go

South; Los Angeles was the only place in which to live. So the Family got up another subscription and raised her allowance, and the Beauty went South.

It was during the following Winter, while I was being pulled between proper pride and my longing to see John, that a note, postmarked Los Angeles, was brought to me. It was long, earnest, confidential. She had been wayward, flippant, troublesome, she acknowledged, but was so ashamed of it all now. Looking back, she could see what a trial she must have been through her independence, but that was all ended. She wanted to do nothing from now on that would displease the Family. Would I not guide her? And what did I think of second marriages? Of a divorced woman remarrying? Did I totally disapprove? She would do nothing against my judgment. There was a man, a Jonas Fletcher, wealthy, forty-five, and very much in love. Should she encourage him? They had many tastes in common, though they attended different churches, he being a Presbyterian; and then the disparity in their ages! I would advise her? And she was mine, gratefully.

I went down to the Public Library for a book that has not yet been written, and then had to fall back on my memory. Is it right for a divorced woman to marry? I think of the Family, then of John. Are there any arguments in favor? Jonas

Fletcher's face is in my imaginative gallery. He is just the man, I am convinced, to be ballast for such a volatile craft as our Beauty, to be the pilot to bring her into quieter seas. I sit down to write an eloquent epistle, citing all the arguments in favor, imaginary and authentic. Altogether, I approve of Jonas Fletcher. He must be a man of sterling worth, and I am eager to call him brother. She must remember there is no difference of creed! Then I write a note to my dressmaker, and send a telegram for John.

The night before our wedding John was paying me his final call, when the maid brought some belated mail. There is only one handwriting in the world that makes me uneasy. John met my eyes with apprehension. "The Beauty?" he queried. I gasped affirmatively. John reached over and tried to make me give up the letter. "Don't read it," he begged, "until after to-morrow. It will just make you wretched, dear."

My fingers clung to it. "Suppose, John—oh, suppose she has gone in for something else terrible, instead of Jonas Fletcher and matrimony! You must let me."

A moment later my laughter rippled over the stiff sheets I held. "It's all right, John," I cried. "The Beauty is—yes, she's married. These are her wedding cards. Let us give thanks. But oh, John! It isn't to Jonas. And who in the world is this plain James Smith?"



PLAIN EVIDENCE

WIFE—What shall we name the baby, John?

HUSBAND—I have decided to leave that entirely to you, my dear.

"John, you've been drinking again!"



MARRIAGE is the hitching-post on the road of life.

THE PINE-CONE FIRE

ONE night more by a pine-cone blaze,
 With the steep farm roof to cover us;
 One last night, while the blue flame plays
 And the wild-wood breath steals over us.
 Brief is life for the deeds we plan!
 Sparks like these are the dreams of man!
 Wit and folly and love and ire
 Flash and sink like a pine-cone fire.

Burn, ye fruits of the cool, dark aisles,
 Where the least light foot falls warily;
 Burn, till the broad hearth winks and smiles,
 And the cricket there twangs merrily!
 What cares life for the deeds we plan?
 Nature laughs when she outwits man!
 Dead hopes rise as the flames mount higher:
 Burn, poor ghosts, in the pine-cone fire!

One night more—and the great world waits,
 And its siren tongues they call to us;
 Friends and lovers will crowd our gates,
 And the old false honors fall to us.
 Brief is life for the deeds we plan;
 Strong is fate o'er the sons of man.
 Still at a breath our heart's desire,
 Kindling, glows like the pine-cone fire!

DORA READ GOODALE



SUBURBAN PLEASURES

MAISIE—Did you have a nice time at the trolley party?
 DAISY—Oh, lovely! We ran across ever so many people I knew.



THAT WAS SOMETHING ELSE

FLORA—Oh, I could get him if I wanted him.
 LENA—But could you get him if I wanted him?

THE GLORY OF VLADIMIR

By Annetta Halliday-Antona

THE old wooden house was very pleasant with its little palisaded garden in front, thick with lilacs and raspberry and black currant bushes. A tall mirror and a picture of the household's patron saint hung upon the kitchen walls; and although there were neither carpets nor curtains, there was a birch-wood sofa and chairs, and bedding of heavy felt, and an oaken chest, massive with ecclesiastical carving, stood in the kitchen to hold the store of linen and the silver spoons, which were the legacy of generations. Scrupulous neatness pervaded every detail, and a faint, oily odor of wax and incense mingled with the balmy smells of the tiny garden. In the distance were fertile fields and brimming barns and the hastening sweep of the Dnieper, and farther yet the bulbous domes and fantastic spires of that ancient city of Little Russia, Kieff the Sacred.

Vladimir was a rich peasant; his shrewd thrift and inherited property had made him for years a fine target for mothers of daughters, and his personality, which had in it the comeliness of the Cossack and the fire of the Tartar, was equally as attractive to the daughters themselves.

But Vladimir showed no haste to take unto himself a wife; year after year sped its careless course, and one by one the manoeuvring heads of families abandoned the chase and married their daughters elsewhere. And then, one day, after forty years of bachelorhood, the village was aghast at the presence of a woman in the gray farmhouse, a girl of whom no one knew anything and of whose

ancestry the hamlet on the outskirts of Kieff was in profound ignorance.

Some said she had been a foundling, some a servant, some a light woman; others hinted darkly that she was a witch and that strange tales could be told of their neighbor's house after dark. But none guessed how Vladimir, returning from a carouse in the city one night, had found her, penniless, hungry, helpless and without friends, seeking death by her father's grave.

He drew the story from her, how the dead man had been a scholar and translated manuscripts for a living; that she was eighteen years old and had never known her mother, and that the father and herself had been all in all to each other. All at once death came and left her alone; for a week she had enough money for food, and shut herself in with her dead; then the authorities came, and the beloved body was taken from her and buried.

The comfortless words of the Russian burial service seemed to echo in the restless leaves:

"He is delivered up to the grave; he is covered with a stone; the clay is disfigured; the vessel is broken; he sojourneth in darkness. . . ."

And the living came close to the dead, and with veins fast with palpitating life, longed for oblivion.

The girl was beautiful, and Tartar blood runs hot. The moonlight falling through the scraggy birches upon the new-made grave glistened upon the strength of her hair, that, becoming unfastened in her grief, flowed in a straight, thick, straw-colored current to her knees. Vladimir

thought he had never seen a woman with so much hair.

He touched her gently.

"What is thy name?" he asked.

"Veronica, the daughter of Piotr," she faltered, the tears starting afresh at the mention of the dead.

"God give thee cheer, Veronica," he said, tenderly. "I am Vladimir of Vladimir, a village lying yonder on the city's outskirts. I have a house and a living there. Marry me tonight and thou shalt be no longer homeless."

"Marry thee!" exclaimed the girl, astonished.

"Yea; why not?" he urged, coveting the clear turquoise of her eyes and the snowy swell of throat that the poor gown displayed. "Thou hast no one and I have no one."

"Marry thee?" she repeated; "let me work for thee instead."

Her unwillingness fired him but the more.

"Sweetheart, I love thee already," he continued; "be my wife, that I may comfort thy grief. Thou art too beautiful and too perilous for servitude."

And he took her hand and led her, bareheaded, through the birch trees, cityward down the whitened pathway where dense and spectral the shadows hung.

"The dove is found, and the nest hath long been lonely," he murmured, with the poetry that the Slav shares with the German. "Let us seek Father Andréi!"

Thus was his wooing, and the populace of little Vladimir were forced to acknowledge the stranger as the mistress of the goodly farm whose spreading acres had long been their envy.

"Just to think that he might have married our Katia, or Sonka, or Marushka!" wailed the mothers.

"But he hath chosen an unknown light of love!" said the daughters, severely.

And the fathers and brothers, noting the extreme fairness of Vladimir's wife, thought largely but held their peace.

Veronica opened her tiny storeroom one July afternoon and put away some mushrooms pickled with currant leaves and clove-pinks. The small apartment was nearly filled with caviare, smoked goose, cheese-bread, poppy-seed pies and vodka; and in a press against the wall were three fine holiday gowns in crimson and orange and blue.

She well understood the looks of envy cast upon her in church of a Sunday morning, for she had more in her two years of marriage than any other woman in Vladimir; but she sighed as she sat down and began some mending in her sunny kitchen that afternoon.

Her thoughts were with Vanka, who worked for Vladimir—Vanka, who was young and gay like herself, and handsome, and whose glances had shot such wicked lightnings at her for some weeks past.

"What dost thou?" asked his voice suddenly, and Veronica saw him gazing at her with his fine, bold blue eyes.

"I sew for Vladimir, my husband," she answered.

"How old thy Vladimir is!" exclaimed the young man, leaning toward her work. "See, here is the little crease where his shoulders stoop."

Veronica raised her head in indignant protest.

"He is not old, and he is a kind husband."

"Why, I thought he cared more for his supper than for a pretty wife."

"Thou hadst better be sure of thy speech," she cried. "Remember, I am Vladimir's wife."

"Dost thou think me like to forget that?"

"Thy tongue is most annoying."

"Why ask me questions, then?"

She shrugged her shoulders petulantly, and he filled some great pails with water and lifted them lightly. Veronica, glancing at him with annoyance as he spilled their contents along the floor, remarked the lithe strength of his movements, the force that every muscle seemed to show. It was true that Vladimir had com-

menced to age a little. The next instant she was angered with herself and angered still more with Vanka. Ingratitude, the priest said, was a sin of deepest hell, and she owed everything, even existence, to her husband.

"I make thee work, good Veronica,"* said Vanka, lightly, as she wiped away the water.

"Thou didst that on purpose," she replied.

"If thou wert my wife," continued the man, banteringly, "I should make thee work day and night, else," he added, in a lower tone, "I should kill thee with love."

"Thou art an impudent lout!" said Veronica, her cheeks crimson as the sea of cherries through the kitchen windows. "Thou forgettest——"

"I desire that I might forget," he broke in, hotly; "thou makest that impossible."

"Go!" The woman's voice trembled somewhat. "Go! thou hast said enough; too much."

But she heard his words all through the afternoon, as she cut up melons and sewed away at quilt-making. The insolent fire of his gaze, so different from Vladimir's earnest eyes, had burned into her soul. She could not erase from her memory the nonchalant utterance, the half-ferocious undercurrent of his words, "else I should kill thee with love."

He had been lawless and insubordinate and careless of her presence ever since the first night he came to them three months past, and Vladimir had said, exultingly:

"I have the best man in all the country hereabouts, a devil for the women—it is a good thing we have no daughters—but a better worker never was in a field; a city fellow, too, Vanka of Kieff."

And some strange sympathy between the two had prevented her repeating to Vladimir any of the rude actions or bold words with which the favorite workman treated the master's

wife, while gradually it came upon her that the boldness pleased her and that Vanka knew it.

Once again during the afternoon he entered with his pails, and waited for them to fill.

"Tell thy husband," he said, crossly, "to find another man. I go away to-night."

"Thou goest away?" demanded Veronica. "Where dost thou go?"

"Where, indeed, but to Kieff! I am not Vladimir, with money to journey to Moscow if need be."

"And the large field not yet done!" exclaimed the woman. "Why didst thou not tell him thyself?"

"The devil take the field!" cried Vanka. "I am only now of the mind to go. Perhaps I want to see some woman down there."

Then he shouldered his pails and went out again in the yard; and as his shadow disappeared through the garden a gloom seemed to settle over the room he had quitted.

Outdoors the sunset was momentarily becoming more splendid; hills and forests were bathed in glory, the flow of the Dnieper was veined with agate, ruby and mother-of-pearl, and from the vast steppe, which like a green ocean undulated to the horizon, a world of fragrance rose, through which the sounds of coming night thrust themselves. The breeze that blew over the prairie was fresh as the salt breeze of the sea, and carried with it the aromatic scent of a million flowers and herbs. At times the whistle of a swan rang over the steppe, and the chirruping and hissing of the insects of the darkness grew louder and louder, the bright glow turned to a violet mezzotint, and lamplight appeared in the narrow windows of a house not far away. Soon the stars would come out, and, holding them gently on its mighty bosom, the Dnieper would cradle the dewdrops of the sky with the rhythm of its sweet, wild whispers.

Vanka was going away! How monotonous the farm would seem without him! The woman sat down by the window and gazed out. Vanka

* Surnames are almost unknown in Russian villages. Master, mistress, children, servants, are all addressed by their Christian name.

was going away! Why did that fact change the face of the world? Somewhere through the gloom Vladimir was riding home to her from Kieff. He would be with her always, the other would go away forever and walk through life with some other woman by his side. The dusk of the kitchen, with its melancholy shadows, seemed to pierce her soul, for all at once she hid her face upon her arms, until a footfall in the room caused her to look up.

"Let us be friends, Veronica," said Vanka, softly. "Why dost thou weep? Wouldst thou, too, see the city of the pilgrims?"

He came nearer to her, his eyes like blue fire.

"How do friends say good-bye, Veronica?" he asked, with a thrill in his low, rich tones.

Veronica murmured something confusedly as she rose with a certain instinctive fear. Existence itself seemed but the leaping of the pulses as blue eye flamed into blue eye.

"Is it this way?"

And as Vanka slipped an arm about her waist he felt that self-control was being as completely swept away as the mists of the Dnieper under the ardor of the sun. Her passion surged up and met his own, her beautiful eyes smiled through their tears into his, and each knew that youth beloved of youth is earth's dearest heaven.

The other arm followed its mate.

"Like this, Veronica?" His voice came brokenly.

"No," whispered the woman, with her breath upon his face.

Vanka's powerful grasp crushed her to him, his kiss sought her cheeks, her throat, her lips, and he closed his eyes as the blossom of her mouth rested upon his mouth. Who that has not been loved in Russia has seen half the force or the frenzy, has known half the poetry or the pathos, of the passion divine?

"I will share thee with no man!" he cried, fiercely, the Tartar blood in him astir; "sooner than think he would kiss thee as I have done, I would kill thee here to-night!"

And as she excited him more and more with the sweet caresses that seem instinct in a woman, he murmured, again and again:

"Thou art too precious, dewdrop; I could never leave thee now!"

"Thou must," she answered, frightened. "Think of Vladimir!"

Tartar blood at best is murderous; something of the brute in it comes ever to the top.

"Speak his name again," exclaimed the man, "and I will strangle it from thy lips! Those lips are mine now; shall I drink from them with his image before me?"

"He will kill thee!" said Veronica, looking around her in terror.

"Better that than to have thee think of him," answered Vanka. "God's mother! A million of thy kisses are too few, for thou hast set me so afire with jealousy and—"

The rest of the sentence was lost upon the sweetness of her mouth.

"Could I be separated from thee after this?" demanded Vanka. "Forget all thy life that has not been mine, for thou shalt go with me to Kieff!"

The *tarantass* rolled slowly over the steppe with Vladimir. He was driving carefully, for the marsh pools, into which many a man warmed by vodka had fallen and disappeared, were numerous, and life was too precious a thing now with Vladimir that he should peril it without need.

His cap was thrust back upon his head, and the fresh night air of the steppe made free with his thick brown hair. There was but a thread or two of silver in his chestnut beard to mark the passage of the years, and he whistled loudly a Little Russ air as he rode through the giant grasses.

After a time another man coming through the tall vegetation of the plain passed him in the twilight, and, recognizing the *tarantass* and its occupant, stopped with a greeting. It was Stepán, his brother, whose child had been dispossessed of the homestead property by Vladimir's unexpected marriage.

"Thou art merry, kinsman," he

said, surlily; "thou hadst best be merry while thou mayest."

"Have thy crops gone wrong, Stepàn? Is the boy ill?" asked Vladimir, kindly.

"Better all else than the blood of my house dishonored."

"What dost thou mean? I am in haste," said the elder brother, impatiently.

"Thou art in haste," repeated Stepàn; "thou hadst better be in thy grave."

"Speak! what hast thou?"

"She hath stained thy character, she hath covered thy head with shame, thy old age is in pawn to a woman without virtue—"

"Hold! I will not listen. Thou shalt swallow thy words—"

"Thou goest home to seek her as I went there to seek thee, but she hath fled. She and the man who hath disgraced thee laugh at thy honor tonight—"

What more he had to say was never uttered. Rising in his seat in the cart, Vladimir lifted his heavy horsewhip and cut his brother across the face.

"Thou liest, hound!" he cried, contemptuously, as he rode on.

But somehow the beauty of the steppe faded out for him, and he was glad when he drew up before his own doorway. The house was dark; but it was late, and Veronica must be in bed and asleep. He concluded that he would not disturb Vanka for fear of awakening her, and therefore unharnessed and stabled the mare himself. Then he entered the kitchen.

The fire, although very low, had not yet burned out, and the room was appetizing with the odor left from preserved fruit. A little apron of his wife's was thrown carelessly over the back of a chair.

Until he saw that he had not realized how deeply his brother's words affected him. His heart gave a great leap of joy, and he walked straight to the bedroom to free his emotion with a caress. The bed was empty and untouched.

Vladimir rubbed his eyes twice; then, opening the bed, he looked into

it, under it, over it; he peeped behind doors and in dark corners; he traversed every foot of the tiny dwelling in agonized search.

"Veronica! Veronica!" he shouted, "where art thou hiding? Come forth, come forth, my Veronica."

Kitchen, bedroom, store cupboard were gone over in turn, then the outbuildings, where Vanka's absence was likewise discovered.

Vladimir returned to the kitchen.

"What a fool I am!" he said, half-aloud. "Something has happened, and they have gone out for a few minutes. There is her apron, her sewing; she will be here before I have my supper."

And, whistling bravely, he stirred the fire and set out some bread and meat. But he could not eat; stamped before him, in letters of fire, were his brother's words, "She hath fled; a woman without virtue!"

"Ten thousand curses on him!" he cried, rising from the table and looking out into the darkness of the steppe. "She will come back!"

And all night long through his waiting and watching he repeated that refrain fiercely, hopelessly, "She will come back!" and the tossing of the prairie grass and of the shadows across the doorway seemed to mock him with the whisper, "She will *never* come back!" His heart chilled like the Dnieper in Winter.

When morning broke he had grown suddenly old; a peasant neighbor, coming to borrow something; was shocked at the change the night had wrought.

"Hast thou seen her?" asked Vladimir, grasping the man's caftan. The peasant understood.

"In town—Vanka," he stammered; and suddenly Vladimir comprehended that his brother had told the truth.

The day wore on, and through it Vladimir worked as a man might who is anxious to fulfil the orderings of a decision. Fodder and produce that would harm by storing were sold, stock was turned over to a neighbor's keeping, window shutters that had not been touched for a century were

locked, the house was carefully closed. Everyone in Vladimir had heard the story, and excitement filled the hamlet. Some terrible event was expected, and almost looked for as a due.

"Forty years," chirped one old man, "have I known Vladimir, the son of Ivan Borostoff and Anna Lazarevitch his wife. I would not be in the wench's place for all the gold in Santa Sophia; that I can assure you."

"A vile temper," gossiped Stepàn's wife. "My poor man was nearly done for, and all because he warned him. That's what comes of duty."

"What wouldst thou have, Elizaveta?" added another listener. "Once a wanton ever a wanton, and they do say . . ."

So the talk and speculation waxed with the hours, and when night approached Vladimir took the *tarantass* and drove away into the steppe. In the distance the lights of Kieff were beginning to show, although the sunset still beat with rosy mist upon the white monasteries and battlemented walls that dotted the wooded heights. Men smelling strongly of earth tramped homeward from the ploughed fields, and Vladimir, looking up from the limitless prairie to the steep hills, saw a herdsman and his love lingering on the highway, their figures silhouetted against the rapidly darkening sky.

He gazed at them a moment wistfully and then drove forward with such recklessness that the mare turned and looked at him in reproach. She was not used to seeing her master so careless of the treacherous pools that glittered where the high grasses parted and the wan light of evening touched them.

"An easy death," thought Vladimir, "and a clean one."

It was full dark when he entered Kieff. The city of the Metropolitans, with its virtues and its vices, was well known to him, and his early years had not been free from its corruption. As he drove through the lighted streets, full of movement

and laughter, the thought came to him for an instant:

"I will enjoy myself again; I have money; I will forget any other existence."

Then a second thought crossed the first one: somewhere amid those clustering houses was his faithless wife. He must find her at any cost; and he hurried over wide grassy spaces and rough lanes, through the familiar thoroughfares, until he reached the home of a Kieff lawyer who had twice won him law-suits.

"Thou wilt see that all is as I wish?" he added, in conclusion, after prolonged converse.

"Good Vladimir," said the man of facts, uneasily, when he had heard all, "you have spoken strangely."

The visitor smiled, and to the lawyer the smile had much significance.

"What thou hast asked," said Vladimir, "has been paid thee, and what I have said must be done. I go upon a journey, and all journeys are uncertain."

"God knows what Kieff will see before morning!" thought the lawyer, as he closed the door upon his client. "He will kill him and then himself. These Cossacks are the devil in jealousy. The woman will come out of it best of all."

The rest of the night was spent in search, a search that toward daybreak was successful when Pecherskoi, the Cliff and, finally, Podol had been examined. Vladimir had guessed right; it was in Podol, the quarter of the people, that the whereabouts of the runaway pair was established, and, the fact assured, he retraced his steps and entered the ancient cathedral of Santa Sophia, just as dawn smiled through the darkness upon its gilded domes.

It was to be a day of great services, and all along the country roads throngs of pilgrims to the sacred city were already arriving. Beside the church walls men and women were asleep under the stars, and Vladimir made his way in between rows of sheepskins, turbans and jack-boots. Some cursed drowsily as he touched them in pass-

ing, and once behind an angle of masonry a woman sat up and beckoned to him indecently.

"Thou art early, son," said the kindly old priest as he came into the confessional at, perhaps, five of the morning and found Vladimir waiting for him. He listened patiently and gave the comfort of the Church, but the man's eyes disturbed him.

"Forgiveness is Christlike, son," he urged, thinking to know the blood with which he had to deal. "'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!'"

"Vengeance is mine!" repeated Vladimir, with set teeth and burning eyes; and the priest sighed anxiously as he watched him go down the nave toward the sunshine.

Veronica looked up with a little scream at the shadow in the doorway, and threw herself imploringly at her husband's feet. She expected no mercy, for women of the Ukraine know well with what fire they play when they tempt Cossack jealousy.

The room was a small apartment in a dilapidated house on the edge of the steppe. It was windowless and full of dark angles; great insects scurried across the mud floor; a pile of rags formed the bed, and a piece of cabbage simmered over a feeble flame.

Vladimir glanced about him. Was it for this that the woman had deserted the country home and its plenty, the overflowing barns and the store-room, the comfort and the care with which it had been his delight to surround her? Surely that violet-eyed, ivory-skinned youth must have had something to offer her surpassing all that he, Vladimir, might possess.

"Child, child!" he groaned, "why hast thou done this?"

At the sound of his voice, which seemed unknown, Veronica started; then she came closer to him.

"Is it thou, thou?" he murmured, "whom I worshipped as an angel from heaven; thou, whom I thought fairest and purest, lying so low before me? Beautiful body that I deemed the home of a beautiful soul, fortunate

art thou that no child calls thee mother!

"Nay, do not touch me, thy flesh is no longer mine; perhaps has never been; and yet so loved I it, so loved I it, that I would give all life, all eternity, to hold thee to my heart.

"Cease tempting, for, should thy wiles succeed, my soul would be as base as thine, and thy life, as well as mine, should pay the penalty. Where thou hast lain an innocent wife thou shalt not rest a harlot.

"Rise, Veronica! I cannot see thee, once my joy, my pride, so shamed with sin."

The woman's heart leaped; perhaps, after all, she was not to die.

"The fault is not alone thine," continued Vladimir; "where is Vanka?"

Fear for her lover pricked courage into Veronica. She looked her husband calmly in the face.

"What wouldst thou with Vanka? Kill me! it is I who am blameworthy."

Vladimir's features contracted painfully. How wonderfully she loved this other man! And he remembered, all in a moment, how, years before, when he was a thoughtless lad of twenty, a woman once said to him:

"I would give my life to save thine. More love I have not!"

And he had laughed and tossed some rubles into her lap. That woman loved, and this woman loved, only in traversing the bridge of years between the two he had lost his youth.

"Thou art afraid for him," he said, slowly, "but thou needst not be. Because of thee he is safe."

"Vanka seeks work," added Veronica; "we must eat."

"Thou wilt have plenty. I have arranged for that."

"What hast thou done?" cried the woman; "what dost thou mean? Hast thou forgiven?"

Forgiveness implied forgetfulness. True to her sex, she would have preferred fierce reproach and bodily danger. Perhaps, then, this man had not cared for her as she supposed.

"Vladimir!" she exclaimed, softly, "thou didst not love me."

He looked at her before he answered her.

"Marry Vanka, and—for thy soul's sake—be true to him! Only thus wilt thou be happy now."

"Thou wilt never need to market thy beauty for daily bread," he continued, his voice deep with pity; "tell Vanka that for Vladimir. Thy future is safe, so far as plenty can assure it."

Then all at once Veronica understood.

"What other man would have done this?" she cried. "How shall I thank thee? How? How?"

Vladimir seized her outstretched hands in both his great brown ones, a mad desire rushing over him to bear her away with him in his arms, to carry her back to the old home on the steppe and forget this nightmare that had taken her from him. She was his so utterly, God and man had both given her to him, and she—had given herself to Vanka.

But surely Vanka could spare one last kiss from the hoard that the future held for him; besides, reasoned Vladimir, he need never know—so

light a thing, fortunately for women, leaves no mark.

"How can I thank thee?" she repeated, and he looked hard at her tremulous red lips and into the moist azure of her eyes. Vanka could spare the kiss, but the woman's character was not strong enough to be sapped of any of its strength.

"Thou canst not!" he said, simply and truly, as he released her hands. "Veronica, Veronica, thou well knowest I love thee still!"

"What dost thou do?" she sobbed, as he turned from her in farewell. "Where dost thou go?"

"Far away," he replied, solemnly; and Veronica wept anew.

For some time she watched the *tarantass* flounder through the tall marsh grass in whose stillnesses the treacherous pools, full of lurking shadows, lay in wait. Then the green waste of the steppe swallowed it up, the black kites wheeled through the blue noonday heavens, and as the waving fronds closed in behind it and bowed afresh to the harrying wind, the harmonies of some exquisite chord of music seemed suddenly to have fallen away into silence.



THE MEERSCHAUM

FORMED of the foam and mystery of the sea!
Snowy as Aphrodite when she rose
Out of the deeps, at the world's birth to be
Man's bliss or bane, his ruin or repose.

Work of the waves, through ages dim unknown,
The storms of centuries about it swept
Where mourned the monstrous ocean's organ tone
In caverns where the weary waters slept.

Gift of the sea! White wonder of the deep!
Now shaped to solace man, his cares decrease,
An incense urn whose fragrant fires shall steep
The senses with the very breath of peace!

E. D. P.

THE LOVE OF AN ARAB

By N. H. Crowell

THE sandaled foot of Yawmoo dug viciously into the little spot of cool sand in the shade of his bullock-skin tent. His bronzed features wore a darker tinge than that given them by wind and sun, and the firm-set lips betrayed the stubbornness with which he battled the emotions that rankled in his breast. Then his broad shoulders shrugged beneath his crimson *kouka*, and Yawmoo gazed thoughtfully into the seething, shimmering distance—gazed, but saw not.

For Yawmoo was a captive—not to bolts and bars, for where were bolts and bars strong enough to restrain that mass of bone and sinew? Yawmoo was a slave—not to kings or potentates, but to Neeseem, a mere girl, the little, dark, red-lipped creature who met the men when they came back from the forage trips. And Yawmoo prayed that his captor would wield her power more abundantly.

Once, only once, he had dared to grasp her hand, and would have held it, but she had withdrawn it so haughtily and so daintily, and so inquiring was the glance she flashed upon him from those dark eyes, that he had fled, foolishly and awkwardly, with a stifling sensation about his heart and the thought that Neeseem was laughing at him, for he had seen her white teeth as she smiled.

It was from that moment that Yawmoo's slavery began, and so well he guarded his secret that he alone could tell how the trifling favors of look and speech bestowed by Neeseem upon his comrades cut and stung into his very soul; but the heart will break

that holds such secrets long, and that of Yawmoo beat fast for utterance.

He looked into the mocking blankness of the desert and studied.

"If it could be in battle!" he said, half-aloud, and threw back his sleeve from an arm as gnarled and knotted as an oak limb—an arm whose splendid sinews had sent his broadsword swirling through many a foeman's breastplate—then slowly shook his head.

"Or in a race!" he went on, and his eyes lighted up at the thought, for was not Ramadin the fleetest steed in all Ben-Ali's tribe? Had not Ramadin carried his master over sixty miles of burning sand, through hostile men, in four hours? Yes, but whom should he race?

Three days later Yawmoo came into camp at sundown, hot and tired. Flinging himself off Ramadin's back, he entered his tent and plunged his blistered face into a basin of water set out by Ben-Hadar, his comrade. How he loved that water, as its soothing coolness crept over his fevered brow and bloodshot eyes! Live in a desert to know what water is.

Presently Yawmoo withdrew his face and beheld Neeseem standing in the doorway. He dashed the water from his eyes to see the better.

"Yawmoo," said the maid, in a voice that made the strong man tremble, "you are thirsty and—and weary; take this—I give it thee."

He took the bowl of cocoa wine that she held out to him.

Yawmoo would have spoken then, but when he could find tongue to say what he would the tent door was un-

darkened—Neeseem was gone. But his heart beat, beat, beat, and he spake harshly to Ben-Hadar, whose brown eyes widened with surprise, for Yawmoo was usually gentle-voiced.

That night Ben-Ali's fiercest warrior arose and strode out on the desert sands. He was battling with a burning thought that crept in upon him like a serpent, and, like a serpent, had struck its victim.

It was a thought of Ramadin—the fleet Ramadin—and of his own knotted arm, and then of something black and alluring—Neeseem's eyes. As he thought, with the chill of the night air reviving him and sending his blood bounding, as it had often done in battle when he fought against odds, Yawmoo came to a decision.

Why should the man whose very name sent fear to the hearts of ten thousand thievish Moslems tremble and stand stupid before one pair of black eyes? Why should the arching of one pair of eyebrows thrill him with greater joy than his greatest victory in battle? Such men act—and Yawmoo decided.

All next day Yawmoo sat silent in his tent—yet, indeed, three times went he out and curried Ramadin. At sunset the black steed was fed lightly, and Yawmoo lifted one of Ramadin's hoofs and petted it.

"Where goest, brother?" asked Ben-Hadar, as he passed, bearing gourds filled with water for the evening meal. Yawmoo turned upon him with a cry so strange and fierce that Ben-Hadar let the gourds fall to the ground. And as he went back to refill them Yawmoo looked after, and repented.

Two hours after, when the pipes were extinguished and the tribe was in slumber, with but the stars to shield from the swoop of swarthy foemen, Yawmoo went out and sought the tent of Hassan Kar, the father of Neeseem.

Three times Yawmoo scratched the sand at Hassan Kar's door, and on the third time Hassan Kar appeared.

"Mayest thou be honored, good

father," said Yawmoo, bowing low; "a great favor have I to ask. Ben-Hadar, who dwells with me, is sore hurt and asks that Neeseem be sent with her wrapping cloths."

"Enter, brother," invited Hassan Kar, as he held the tent door wide.

"No, good Hassan, I wait here. Send Neeseem quickly, I pray you, and I will go with her that no harm befall." Yawmoo winced as he said this—he knew not why.

In a moment Neeseem slipped through the doorway, carrying the white bandages over her arm.

"Is it you, friend Yawmoo? Let us hasten to thy friend. Is the hurt a great one?" Neeseem's hand clutched Yawmoo's arm and she looked up into his face anxiously. Yawmoo thought of naught but the hand on his arm as he answered:

"Yes, very. Let us hurry."

Neeseem ran at Yawmoo's side, her breath coming quick as she kept up with his mighty stride.

"Neeseem," he said as they went along, "Neeseem—"

"Yes, Yawmoo," replied the girl, hesitatingly.

"Have—have you seen my Ramadin's new blanket—the one from the big city? It is grand!"

"No, I have not yet seen it."

"Wouldst like to, Neeseem?"

"Yes, Yawmoo, greatly—but not now. Let us hurry to your friend."

"My friend? Yes, yes, I forgot—but here is the tent—within lies my comrade—I open the door—this way. What seest thou, Neeseem?"

"I see Ben-Hadar—and asleep," answered the girl, slowly. Then quickly she turned and shot the question:

"What meanest thou, Yawmoo?"

For answer Yawmoo caught both her hands in one of his and drew the shrinking maid toward him.

"Neeseem," he said, in a voice that sounded far away, "Neeseem, I'm rude and rough to you, but you know—"

"Let me go; you frighten me! Shall I call Ben-Hadar?"

"Allah, I must do it!" cried the

man. One arm shot out and encircled the girl's slight figure; a broad palm fell gently but firmly over Neeseem's dusky lips, and, lifting the girl, Yawmoo sped swiftly to where the black steed was tethered.

When he removed his palm Yawmoo noticed that consciousness had graciously left her, and for a moment he repented, but—it was too late. Quickly he fitted the bit to Ramadin's mouth, sprang astride his back and bore the unconscious burden away—he cared not whither.

It was some minutes ere Neeseem came to herself, and when she opened her eyes it was to meet those of Yawmoo. Long she looked into those burning orbs, then spoke:

"And *you*, Yawmoo, treat me thus?"

"I saw no other way," said Yawmoo, weakly.

"For what?"

Yawmoo answered nothing; he was busy thinking.

"Did you love me, Yawmoo?" asked the girl. Ramadin's feet stood still in the sand as Yawmoo gazed into the dusky face of the girl for whom he had staked his life. What he saw there cannot be told, but suddenly Ramadin's rein fell loose upon his proud neck, and two pairs of bronze lips met in a kiss far more expressive than words could ever be. And then, when Ramadin's head was turned, with her hands clasped on the sturdy arm of Yawmoo, Neeseem said:

"And you would have stolen me, Yawmoo? Why, it is I that am stealing you!"

Yawmoo is wiser now. He looks at his mighty arm, then at the sleek sides of Ramadin, and then glances inside the bullock-skin tent where Neeseem sits, and he smiles a broad smile of happiness. He cannot quite understand the dusky Neeseem, but he is content.



A SCARABÆUS

A CUNNING carver—Arab, Roman, Greek—
(Whiche'er he was, how well he knew his art!)

Shaped this rare stone from the Egyptian mart,

With flawless limning, in the time antique.

Perchance some doting lover, come to seek

An offering for the mistress of his heart,

Chose this, and thrilled to see her red lips part

And the swift blushes mantle her soft cheek,

When, set within a circlet of dull gold,

She marked it gleam upon her olive hand.

Saved from the wreckage of the years, this toy,

Worn by a maiden in a distant land,

To-day as perfect as when wrought of old,

Brings home to me the Egyptian lover's joy.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



A REASONABLE CONSEQUENCE

FIRST BOY—Your little baby brother hasn't any hair.

Second Boy—No; the doctor what brought him was bald.

WHEN AGE COMES ON

WHEN age comes on, in empty years to be,
 Shall I recall old sins remorsefully,
 Temptations that have conquered; shall I wring
 My very soul for yielding to a thing
 That pleadeth to the wayward youth of me?

Or, gazing through dead years, shall old eyes see
 Delights passed by in life's delicious Spring,
 Joys dreamed, not done, and mourn, remembering,
 When age comes on?

Oh, golden youth, swift, glorious and free,
 Choose from the stores at either hand of thee.
 What though ye pay in coinage of regret!
 The sad, mad deeds thy heart may not forget
 Shall haunt thee like dim strains of melody,
 When age comes on.

JOHN WINWOOD.



RECKONED AS NAUGHT

“**Y**OU will be very contented, I am sure,” said The Man of the World, as he puffed his cigar.

“Well, I shall be quite comfortable,” answered The Girl Who Worked for Her Living.

“I suppose you will decorate your room prettily?”

“I have already begun decorating.”

“And you will need some pictures and etchings for the walls?”

“I have enough.”

“But surely a few new ones——”

“There will be no place in my room for any more than those I now have.”

“Then, perhaps, you will permit me to send some silver for your dressing table or ornaments for your desk?”

“My dressing table is overstocked already, and I do not boast the luxury of a desk.”

“Then I shall select the newest books.”

“They would bore me; and, besides, I have no place for them.”

“But in the evening, when your work is over and you are alone, what will you do? What can I suggest? What do you want?”

“Nothing.”

And The Girl Who Worked for Her Living glanced sharply at The Man of the World, but he was relighting his cigar, and did not realize that for once he had been reckoned as naught.

BLANCHE CERF.

THE BETROTHAL OF OTOYO

By Onoto Watanna

O T O Y O - S A N ' S eyes shone brightly, and in each round cheek was a bright red spot. The small pink hands were clasped one in the other, and she sat very quietly as her maid dressed her hair. She would not for worlds have betrayed before even the maid the intense excitement under which she was laboring. But her affected air of repose and indifference did not deceive the astute attendant, who brushed the long black locks viciously and as if in protest that she was not taken fully into her mistress's confidence.

An auspicious time had arrived in the life of Otoyo-san. Her father had chosen a husband for her. And now she was being dressed for the "look-at meeting," which was to occur that evening.

It was hardly a year since her father, returning from one of his trips to Tokyo, had announced to his wife his intention of marrying Otoyo within the next year to the son of one of the wealthiest merchants of the big city. The Mizutany family of Tokyo, although of extreme wealth, was not of the nobility. On the other hand, Nobanaga, the father of Otoyo, could trace his ancestry back in one long unbroken line of nobles and warriors eminent for their strength, fearlessness and pride. The Mizutany family, anxious to be allied with the nobility, had approached Oto Nobanaga, and he, glad of the opportunity of repairing his fallen fortunes, had gracefully consented to the union. One year of probation was given to the young couple, and during that period the boy was kept at school, and Otoyo

made the most of her few precious months of liberty.

Her family lived in one of the old pretentious mansions affected by the nobles, in the beautiful town of Hakata, but her home was separated by several rice fields from any neighbors, and Otoyo had been kept in great seclusion. However, since his acquaintance with the Mizutany family, Nobanaga had started some business in Tokyo, and was absent from his home quite often, so that the girl during these absences roamed at will through the surrounding forests and meadows and rice fields. She had no playmates or companions, and as for a lover, although she was at the romantic age of fifteen years, such a thing was unheard of among girls of her rank. She had been brought up always to understand that at the proper time a husband would be chosen for her, and this husband she would be commanded to accept, obey and even love.

Thus far her life had been uneventful, with a never-ending sameness each day that sometimes wearied the girl. It had been with feelings almost akin to pleasure that she looked forward to the day when she should be given to her bridegroom. She had vague dreams of what he should be like, and she gratified her imagination with pictures of a hero after her own fancy.

Otoyo had been educated at home. Her own mother, up to the time of the great illness that had made her a chronic invalid, had been her instructor and constant companion, guarding her and directing her education in such a way that the result was

that rarest and sweetest of all types of Japanese womanhood—a daughter of a noble, carefully nurtured under a domestic home training and education. The gentler and sweeter qualities of womanhood were cultivated, and less attention paid to the girl's intellectual achievements. Submission, meekness, generosity and the repression of the emotions—these were the very important matters that the girl had to study. And Otoyo was in every respect a success, and in her sweetness of disposition, her gentleness of demeanor and tenderness of heart reflected credit on the old-fashioned method of training she had received. Still, underlying all this outward meekness, there was a great deal of impulse and fire in the girl's nature, which was why a queer little germ of question and protest against the narrowness of her lot began to come to life in her half-wakened soul of dreams.

One day, wandering aimlessly with her maid through the neighboring forest, Otoyo had met a young man, and this was an event in her life, for Otoyo had never seen any young men save her own relatives, and the coolies and servants or the peasantry. And, moreover, this young man seemed to her excited fancy unlike anyone she had ever seen. He had a pale, attractive face, melancholy eyes, a high, noble brow and a fine, slender form. He was dressed in the garb of a student.

Otoyo found herself standing still in front of him, and she was conscious of the fact that when the youth looked at her she could not remove her eyes from his, and so for a long moment the two faced each other in fascinated silence. Then the intrusion of the maid's hand through Otoyo's arm broke the spell and woke her with a queer shock of pain and pleasure commingled.

Otoyo shivered and hung her head, but the next moment she was blushing all rosy red, even to the tips of her little ears, and was returning the low and graceful obeisance of the stranger. The youth was blushing

also, and with their eyes greedily fixed on each other something strange and new welled up in both of them, and involuntarily they sighed. No word was spoken, and in less than a minute Otoyo had turned and resumed her walk silently with her maid.

But that night the strange little image she had fashioned in her mind of the man who would some day be her husband crumbled to pieces and vanished into mist-land, and the girl dreamed instead of a face that was as tender as Kwannon's own. And after that day she was wont to bend her steps toward the spot where she had first met the youth.

One day a huge bunch of cherry blossoms, exquisitely arranged, lay at her feet. The girl knew the message of the flowers. She had not been forgotten, then! She caught her breath with a little gasp that was almost a sob, and then, stooping, picked up the flowers, and kneeling, buried her sweet face among them.

Suddenly she was conscious that someone was close to her, regarding her. She felt, before she saw, the presence and she knew who it was, and the knowledge sent a delicious thrill quivering through her veins. She looked up, and again her shy eyes encountered the compelling gaze of the young man. They were both very pale now, perhaps because they were both innocent and each had a premonition of disaster.

"Ah! I must ask excuse," said Otoyo, stammering. "The flowers—they are yours?" for she perceived he held a few in his own hands, and those in her arms she held out toward him. But he pushed them back to her, and in doing so their hands touched. The girl retreated.

"They are yours," the young man said, "and this also." He handed her a small scroll, and then, turning quickly, left her standing alone.

Otoyo did not do as many girls in her place would have done—that is, examine the scroll immediately upon the disappearance of the young man. Her dilated eyes followed him till she

could no longer see him, and then she folded the scroll with little hands that trembled and reverentially placed it in the bosom of her kimono.

"How so many honorable flowers at once?" both her mother and maid had asked her, in surprise, on her return to the house.

Otoyo smiled faintly.

"They were so honorably sweet to-day," she said, softly.

Not even the maid or her mother must see that precious scroll. Otoyo lay awake through many hours after the household had retired, waiting for all to sleep. Then she rose, and stealthily, by the andon light, she untied the scroll and read the writing thereon. It was a poem, and to her. Her face, her hands, her eyes, her grace, purity, sweetness, goodness were its theme.

O lovely maiden, my moon thou art!
Otoyo-San, thou hast my heart!

ended each verse.

She became so dizzy with ecstasy that she almost slipped against the lighted andon. And the quiet moon looked in on her and smiled, and lingered and kissed the girl's sweet, dreamy face.

That was the beginning of their courtship, if such their communion can be called. They met in secret, as lovers before them have done, and the meetings were short, pitifully short, a mingling of great joy and agony. For it must be remembered that Otoyo was daughter of a noble and betrothed to one of her own rank, for thus had her father described the Mizutany family to her. And the young man, who was inferior in rank to Otoyo, was also betrothed. Still, neither of the lovers had found the courage to confess to the other the truth. It was because of this mutually hidden secret that a certain restraint ever remained between them. It was a timid, sweet and inexpressibly sad feeling, with such a small moment's joy to compensate for the tragedy each realized they were weaving around themselves. And the shadow dark-

ened, the storm was threatening; soon it would descend and overtake them.

Now they were dressing Otoyo for this odious look-at meeting with the man her father and his father had chosen for her husband. She could hear her father's voice down stairs. He was directing the servants, who were preparing for the little banquet that was to be given in her honor that evening.

All the weary night before Otoyo had lain with wide-open eyes, which were dry of tears but bespeak the hopeless heartache within. It had been over a week since she had seen her lover, for since her father's return she was forced, from fear, to remain indoors. Once, indeed, she had ventured out alone, and that time her father, stalking heavily behind her, had overtaken and accompanied her.

Despite the bright eyes and flushed cheeks, Otoyo was really quite ill. The maid, watching her closely and suspiciously, saw the eyelids flicker at times, the lips tremble. She knew Otoyo's teeth were tightly clenched together to prevent them from chattering, and she knew also that her supreme effort to contain herself was even worse for her than if she could have found some outlet for her feelings in tears. And so, with sympathetic understanding, she put off to the last the care of the girl's face, busying herself with other parts of her toilet, and feeling sure that the girl would weep and break down ere long.

As she knelt before Otoyo, perfuming and manicuring the small, exquisite hands, she began talking to her.

"They say thy honorable lord is augusty handsome?"

She put it as a question, though she knew Otoyo had never seen him. There was no answer from the mute little figure, sitting now rigid and upright. Her face was turned toward the window, through which she could see far beyond the fields and valleys to where she had wandered with her lover. Only the pitiful semi-profile was visible to the maid.

"Also they do say he is honorably noble and good?"

Still no answer.

"And also he hath much wealth?"

She waited a trifle longer this time, but still Otoyo did not stir.

"*Moshi, moshi*" (please, please), said the maid softly, and stopped her work.

Otoyo moved her head, and looked down.

"It—it is all true—they say," she answered, her voice quivering and sounding strained and far away.

But Otoyo did not weep. The maid was mistaken in her and was not capable of understanding this endurance—something that, besides being cultivated, was an hereditary trait in Otoyo's character. And so with reluctance the maid finally powdered and prepared the girl's face.

When she passed from her maid's hands Otoyo looked very beautiful. Flowers were in her hair and on her breast—big poppies, that matched her lips and cheeks in their vivid redness. But the fire had died out from the girl's eyes, leaving them dim and lustreless, as she paused in the doorway before descending. Then she seemed to gather her scattered senses, and suddenly the maid saw, with a feeling of compassion and horror, that Otoyo was smiling.

And so it was that when she entered the *zashishi* (guest-room), bowing gracefully to her father, no one would have guessed from looking at her that Otoyo had ever known a tear.

It was not a warm day, but it seemed to Otoyo as if the incense-laden room was so hot that it was the cause of her dizziness. When the party had arrived she scarce noted to whom she made the prostrations. It was through a mist that she saw them one and all, and it seemed to her poor, bewildered vision that they melted somewhere into space, as she mechanically went through the long, low bows; and then soon she found herself seated on her mat, one of a large semicircle, and the little tea-drinking ceremony had perfunctorily begun.

Otoyo had forgotten herself, where she was, what it all meant. She picked up her little cup mechanically, and mechanically she drank its contents, and then, suddenly, memory, invincible, cruel and accusing, came back to her, and she knew that thus she had sealed her own betrothal, and a terrible pain tugged at her heart-strings.

Someone was speaking her name. It was her father's voice. He was addressing the company, and she saw as in a dream the smiling good-will reflected on the faces of all turned toward her, and then—someone from out the circle came quickly forward and took the seat by her, and she knew they two were removed, even though infinitesimally, from the others. But it seemed to her excited imagination they were sitting far off from the rest of the company, and she knew that he who was so close to her was the one to whom they had given her, the one who stood in the light of the man she loved—yes, the one whom she had prayed passionately, if guiltily, to the gods to remove.

She gasped and staggered to her feet, and stood trembling and swaying. Her companion had risen quickly also, and the guests, puzzled and even shocked at this strange interruption of the feast, were holding their cups from their lips and regarding the pair in spellbound silence.

And then, all of a sudden, Otoyo's hands were taken in a warm, close clasp, a clasp that was so familiar and sweet and dear that it was agonizing to her aching heart and senses. And then came a voice—a low, tender, wooing voice—so sweet and caressing, that instinctively she subsided closer to him:

"*Anata!*" (thou) was all he said.

Otoyo looked up fearfully. Did her eyes deceive her? She was clinging passionately to her own lover's hands, and at last the floodgates of her heart opened, and there, before the assembled guests and relatives, she wept on his breast.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE TONG

By Edwin J. Webster

LEE CHUNG stood irresolute at the entrance to the little Chinese gambling house. It was nearly a month since he had enjoyed a big opium smoke. Tucked away in his deep, loose pockets were one week's wages. They would pay for an ordinary smoke; but the desire for a big smoke, one that would last for days, was strong within him, and after a moment's hesitation he entered the den and was quickly absorbed in the excitement of fan-tan.

Lee's luck came with a rush. Play as he would, it did not seem possible for him to lose. Through the night he sat, every thought concentrated on the game. When the light of dawn began to creep into the room, dimming the low-hung Chinese lamps, and the players dispersed, Lee swept into his pockets more money than he had ever before possessed. The delights of a smoke—luxurious and long-continued—could now be his.

Without waiting for rest or food, Lee hurried to an opium joint—not the one he usually frequented, but Hop Long's, the best equipped and most expensive in all Chinatown. There he called for a pipe, and, reclining on a couch, was soon deep in the delights of opium dreams.

How long the big smoke lasted Lee never knew. As fast as his pipe was emptied he filled it; when he woke from one dream he smoked incessantly until a stupor again overcame him. The yellow and the red dragons fought hour after hour. Then the big green dragon appeared on the scene, and finally even he changed and became white. When the green dragon of an opium dream turns white, it is a

sign that even the seasoned nerves of a Chinaman are beginning to give way. A white man is dead, or insane, long before that stage is reached.

Lee finally awoke with his money gone and every nerve quivering from the effects of the big smoke. For a few hours he felt no particular desire for opium. Then the reaction came, and the *yen yan*, or craving for the drug, which he had felt before was as nothing to the raging desire that now seized him. Lee knew then, that he must have opium or go insane.

The great problem was where to borrow the money with which to purchase the drug. Lee went first to a member of his own tong, or secret society. He met with a direct refusal, for his spendthrift habits and love of fan-tan and opium had put his credit on a very low basis. In vain he importuned member after member of his tong. They met his appeals with the calm callousness of prudent Chinamen, which is the hardest thing in the world to change to pity. In despair, Lee was about to resort to violence to gain money enough to satisfy the insistent desire for one more smoke, when, as he stood undecided, Hop Sing, the merchant, placid and prosperous-looking, passed by.

Now Hop Sing belonged to a different tong from that of Lee Chung, and it was decidedly bad form for Lee to speak to him at all, still more to try to borrow money from him. But the opium-craving had driven away every other thought from Lee's whirling brain. Hop Sing met Lee's request with a cold stare. Then a cunning look crept into his little almond eyes.

"Friend," said Hop Sing, in caress-

ing tones, "I will not lend you money, but if you will do me a service I will repay you so liberally that there will be no need for you to ever borrow from the dogs who have refused to aid you. But the affair is not one to be discussed on the street. Come to my house, where none will disturb us."

Safe inside the house, Hop Sing unfolded his plan. It was nothing less than the betrayal of the secrets of Lee Chung's tong. At first Lee was horrified at the suggestion. Then his tempter recalled the rebuffs Lee had met from the members of his tong, and displayed the gold that would purchase unlimited opium delights. Every tingling nerve, every drop of blood in Lee's body urged him to accept Hop Sing's offer. To betray the secrets of his tong meant death in the end, but, on fire with the fierce craving for more opium, Lee felt he was willing to die if he could first enjoy one more big smoke.

Lee left the house and hurried to an opium joint with even more money in his pockets than after the great game of fan-tan. But Hop Sing was in possession of the secrets of the great Sam Yup Tong.

The next day was one of great trouble for the members of the Sam Yup Tong. On the telegraph poles, which are the newspapers of Chinatown, were found notices telling some of the precious secrets of the order. The members of the Sen Yup, the rival tong, sneered in their faces in a meaning manner. Then some of the secrets of the tong were shouted on the streets, a proceeding that will drive the usually placid Chinaman almost insane with rage. That evening one of the secret meetings of the tong was interrupted with ribald songs and blows on the door. It was evident that important secrets had been betrayed. Penniless Lee Chung had been seen to enter the house of Hop Sing, and soon after had displayed a handful of gold pieces. He was the culprit, and must die.

Murders for which the Highbinders were blamed had been occurring with

monotonous regularity in San Francisco, and the Chief of Police had finally notified the heads of the various tongs that unless they were stopped he would break up every secret society in the city. No police officer in America could do this, but the Chief could make lots of trouble if once thoroughly aroused. So Lee Chung must be punished in some manner that would not draw down the wrath of meddlesome officials on the tong. But his doom was none the less certain. For the Chinese are an old and very wise people, and know many ways to accomplish their ends.

Lee Chung was enjoying the raptures of his big smoke. The dragons were fighting in a rosy haze for his delectation. Suddenly they seemed to merge into one big dragon. Then Lee became languidly conscious that he was being violently shaken. He slowly opened his eyes and, with a start, saw standing at his side two of the officials of his betrayed tong. Lee then knew that his treachery had been discovered. With true Chinese stoicism he rose from his couch and silently prepared to follow his guides to the Hall of Judgment, where he would be tried and his doom pronounced.

Through the electric-lighted streets, past the blue-coated guardians of an alien civilization, Lee followed his guards. With characteristic race reticence, it scarcely occurred to him to appeal to a policeman. A Chinaman would rather die by sentence of his own tong than take his case into the strange and little understood "American" courts. To all appearances free to go where he would, Lee knew he was watched by unseen keepers, and that a break for liberty would be useless. Past Joss-house and quaint Chinese theatre the little group hurried. Lee at first wondered why he did not meet any members of his tong. Then he remembered they would all be at the Hall of Judgment, whether his guards were hurrying and where he must answer to the charge of treason.

The big Hall of Judgment was

hung with mystic tapestries of silk, on which was told the story of the glories of the tong for centuries past. About the hall was tier after tier of benches, on which were seated the members of the tong. On a little dais at the end of the hall sat the president, wrapped in the robe of state assumed only on the most solemn occasions. Back of the dais was a doorway curtained in black. Lee Chung gave a little shudder as his eyes fell on the black curtain, for he knew who was behind it.

Lee's guides took their places at the sides of the hall, leaving him standing in the centre. Every member was now seated—except two. One was Lee Chung, standing desolate amid the array of hostile faces. The other was the grim figure back of the curtain, waiting to deal out to Lee Chung the punishment on which the tong might decide.

The president read to Lee the charge against him of having betrayed the sacred secrets of the tong. Lee made no reply. One by one the witnesses told their stories, welding an unbreakable chain of circumstantial evidence against the little Chinaman. But Lee refused to examine them, and heard their evidence in silence. Fate had reached out for him, and he accepted his doom with sullen resignation.

When the evidence had all been presented, the president of the tong put the question of Lee's guilt to a vote. Every man in the hall had known Lee for years, but every vote was "Guilty." Then the president, rising from his low seat on the dais, pronounced sentence. Lee Chung had proved himself a traitor to the tong, and he must die by beheading. The black curtain at the end of the room swept back as the voice of the president echoed through the hall, and the executioner of the tong, clad in red and carrying the official sword, five feet long and double-edged, advanced to carry out the sentence.

Lee had expected death, even by torture, but to die by beheading—that meant, according to Chinese

theology, to wander headless through all eternity. For the first time his stoicism left him. He fell on his knees, pouring out a passionate appeal, not for life, but for death in any other form, no matter how painful. His was the only voice heard in the Hall of Judgment. From every side cold, impassive eyes looked down on him as he begged for mercy. Then, at a sign from the president, two members of the tong stepped forward, tossed his pigtail over his head and stretched out the arms of the still kneeling suppliant. The executioner stepped forward and poised his heavy sword. It descended swiftly and suddenly. With consummate skill the executioner stopped the blade within an inch of Lee's neck, touched him lightly with the edge, and, turning to the president of the tong, said:

"Lee Chung is dead."

His guards fell back, and Lee Chung was free to rise to his feet. The fear of death was on him, and he could not understand why he was still alive.

"What has happened to me? Why am I alive?" he asked, in stammering tones.

Seated about the hall were men who had known Lee Chung since he was a little almond-eyed baby, but there was no answer to his question. The guards hastily conducted him from the Hall of Judgment. At the entrance of the hall hung a yellow placard such as are used by the Chinese for official announcements. "Lee Chung is dead," said the placard. And Lee was thrust out into the street.

Lee's heart was still beating in jumps, his nerves were twitching, and he scarcely yet comprehended what had happened as he stepped on the pavement and mechanically turned to the right in the direction of the nearest electric light. A little way down the street he met Hop Sing. Although Hop Sing belonged to a different tong, after the experience he had been through Lee felt the need of human companionship. In his pocket was still some of the money he had

earned by betraying the secrets of his tong.

"Good day to you, Hop Sing," said Lee. "Will you——?"

But Hop Sing, without making answer, passed on with unseeing eyes. Lee did not yet understand, and felt duly enraged at Hop Sing's refusal to recognize him. A little further down the street Lee reached a Chinese restaurant where he had often feasted in past days. No one was seated at the little tables, and Lee, who had been without food during the long smoke, entered and sat down. The silently moving Chinese waiters paid no attention to him. Lee became impatient, and called to one of them to take his order. Without answering, the waiter stepped up to the proprietor of the place and directed his attention to Lee. Not a word was spoken by either. A moment later Lee saw a little paper lying folded on the table in front of him. He unfolded it. On it four words were written: "Lee Chung is dead." And Lee silently left the restaurant.

Up and down the narrow streets of Chinatown he trudged in his loneliness. He met men with whom he had eaten and drunk, women whom he had known since they were girls, and little children with whom the careless, good-natured Lee had always been a favorite. But no one spoke to him or returned the timid greeting that he sometimes ventured. All looked past him with placid eyes, the only notice they took being to shrink away when he walked close to them. Lee wandered into the white quarter. There no one noticed him, and the succession of cold white faces seemed to add to his loneliness. Hour after hour the little Chinaman trudged the streets. Except for the burly policemen, who looked with suspicion on a Chinaman abroad at such unseemly hours, no one paid the slightest attention to him.

When morning came, weary, foot-sore, and, above all, terribly lonely, Lee made his way back to the house where he had boarded. As he passed through the streets of Chinatown he

saw placard after placard that had been posted up in his absence. Each bore the same short announcement: "Lee Chung is dead." He passed fellow-countrymen on their way to work, but none appeared to recognize him. He found the door of the house where he lived locked. When he knocked it was cautiously opened, but when the owner saw who was standing outside, the door was shut quickly, and Lee heard the sharp click of the big bolts as they were shot into place. Again and again Lee knocked, but there was no answer. He at last ceased his fruitless task and resumed his walk. A short distance down the street he stopped and looked back. The door had been opened, and the owner of the house and his wife were standing outside. They were not looking at Lee, but were washing the door where he had knocked and the steps on which he had stood. This was to free the house from the contamination caused by the touch of a dead body.

Weariness and hunger were forgotten in the sharper pang of loneliness which swept over Lee at that sight. Suddenly, for the first time since his doom had been pronounced, a ray of hope came to him. In former days—that now seemed years ago—when Lee had been fortunate at fan-tan, he had often bought toys for his nephew, the chubby little son of his favorite sister. The child had received them with the demure delight of Chinese babies and always had a smile of welcome for his uncle. The little fellow would surely be too young to appreciate the fate that had fallen on Lee. Wonderfully cheered by the thought, Lee turned down a side street and hurried toward his sister's house. He passed little parties of children on their way to the Chinese schools. They looked at him with vacant eyes, the groups dividing so that he might pass without coming in contact with them. Lee did not mind this; his pet nephew would be glad to see him. That was comfort enough for the present to Lee's lonely soul.

The little fellow was playing on the

pavement in front of his home. At the sound of Lee's voice he turned and saw Lee, who had quickened his steps in his impatience to be recognized once more, even by a baby. The child gave one look, in which there was more of deadly terror than recognition, and toddled into the house as fast as his tiny feet could carry him. His mother looked out to see what had frightened the child, and saw Lee standing irresolute on the pavement. The door closed, and Lee heard the snap of the lock as his sister turned the key. Then Lee knew that as long as he lived he

would be a stranger to his own race and kindred.

A messenger boy was standing in front of the telegraph office, proudly exhibiting a revolver to a knot of his friends. Suddenly a little Chinaman broke through the group, snatched the revolver and dashed down the intricate alleys of Chinatown, where his pursuers soon lost the trail.

They found Lee's body under the placard at the entrance of the Hall of Judgment, the placard that had first announced his doom. The look of loneliness had left the little Chinaman's face.



ALWAYS

THE stars that glimmer through the heart of night,
When daylight breaks, unseen, shine steadfast still;
And so my love, in absence, gleams as bright
As in thy presence, dear, and ever will.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



HIS TOTAL ECLIPSE

THE CYNIC—Ah! poor man, he's gone over to the silent majority!
JONES—Dead?
THE CYNIC—No. Married.



TO THE MANNER BORN

JAGGLES—When one is annoyed by conversation in a theatre it is generally by the rich people in the boxes.
WAGGLES—Another proof that money talks.



THE HIGHER CRITICISM

B RIGGS—How did you like the play last night?
GRIGGS—Horrible! It was so indecently decent.

IN LOVE'S CONFESSORIAL

TO you, whose every word and deed and thought
 Ring true and honest as thrice-tested gold,
 The tale of my shortcomings I have brought—
 Now you have given the pardon I besought,
 Forgive the little sins I have not told!

The foolish, petty faults I scarce can name;
 So mean and paltry are they, that I fear
 You would not think them worth a word of blame,
 You would but pity and—despise them, dear.
 And since I love you so in woman's wise,
 Nor am from woman's curse of pride exempt,
 I would far rather read within your eyes
 Hatred, my best-belovèd, than contempt!

Wherefore, to you, whose every deed and thought
 Are crystal-clear—you, whom I love too well—
 The tale of my shortcomings I have brought,
 And you have given the pardon I besought,
 Forgive the little sins I cannot tell!

AILEEN BEATH.



SAME OLD THEME—WITH VARIATIONS

IT was the old, old story. They met, they loved to distraction. After a while he grew weary of the affection she lavished upon him. She reproached him. They quarreled. She returned his ring and presents; told him, with a burst of tears, that she never wanted to see him again, and watched his departure from the window. That night she cried herself to sleep in the orthodox way of broken-hearted maidens. He celebrated his deliverance from apron-strings by getting gloriously intoxicated.

They met after five years had elapsed; and herein this tale differs from the regulation story. He was not filled with pangs of jealousy at beholding her with other men; she felt no desire to make mean remarks about the girls whose company he sought. They didn't sit in a corner together and make pessimistic remarks anent everything in general and life in particular until they discovered that the long-dormant love for each other was what made things so blue for them. They didn't renew their engagement, with wedding-cake and the strains of the "Lohengrin March" in the near future, as the curtain falls.

They sat in a corner, it is true, but not to talk of the past—simply to bore each other telling the bright things their respective children said and did. "And here endeth the first lesson."

R. S. PHILLIPS.

CROWNED WITH ONE CREST

By Gertrude Atherton

PEOPLE were beginning to wonder if an American, having captured a title and worn it for five years, would resign it for mere good looks and brains; in other words, if Lady Carnath, formerly Miss Edith Ingoldsby, of Washington, and still earlier—before her father had found leisure to crown a triumphant financial career with the patriotic labors of United States Senator—of St. Louis, Missouri, would marry Butler Hedworth, M.P., a gentleman of some fortune and irreproachable lineage, who had already made himself known on the floor of the House, but was not so much as heir-presumptive to a title. So many American maidens had placidly stood by while their mammas “arranged” a marriage between their gold-banked selves and the improvident scion of an historical house that the English, when forced to admit them well-bred, found solace in the belief that these disgustingly rich and handsome girls were without heart.

Nevertheless, Lady Carnath, who had worn her weeds only a year, permitted Butler Hedworth to pay her attentions so pronounced that her world was mildly betting on his possible acceptance as husband or lover. It was argued that during the life of Lord Carnath his wife's demeanor had been above comment, but a cynic remarked that women had all sorts of odd ideals; and was widely quoted.

Edith Ingoldsby had bought her Earl and paid a high price for him; nevertheless she had liked him better than any man but one that she had ever known, and they had been the best of

friends. When she met him she was in the agonies of her first passion, and had clutched the first opportunity to bury alive the love that was destroying her beauty and her interest in life.

The passion had lingered for a time, then gone the way of all such when unfed by a monotonous environment and too much leisure. She found it very interesting to be an English countess. For a while she had the impression of playing a part in a modern historical drama; but before long she realized, with true American adaptability, that her new life was but the living chapters of a book whose earlier parts had been serial instalments of retiring memory. Her great wealth, her beauty, her piquant, dashing, thoroughbred manner, her husband's popularity and title created for her a position that would have closed any wound not irritated by domestic unhappiness; and this canker was not in her rose. When Carnath died she mourned him sincerely, but not too profoundly to anticipate pleasurable the end of the weeded year. When she met Hedworth she was as free of fancy and of heart as if she had but stepped from a convent.

“Yes, I was in love—” she admitted to him one evening as they sat alone. She blushed as she tripped at the word “before.” Hedworth had made no declaration as yet; they were still playing with electricity, and content with sparks. “At least, I thought I was. All girls have their love freaks. I had had several—when I was in my teens. This seemed more serious, a real *grande passion*—be-

cause there was an obstacle: he was married. If he had been free, if there had been no barrier between myself and what I wanted, I think it would have been quite different. You see, I had had my own way so long that the situation, combined, of course, with the man himself—who was very magnetic—fascinated me; and I let myself go, to see what it would be like to long for something I could not have. I suppose it was my imagination that was at work principally; but I ended by believing myself frantically in love with him."

Hedworth stood up as she paused, and leaned against the mantel, looking down at her. They were in her boudoir, a yellow satin room that looked like a large jewel casket. Lady Carnath's long, slender round figure was sufficiently covered with black chiffon; on her white neck and arms and in her black hair were many diamonds; she had dressed for the opera, then given the evening to Hedworth. Her dark face was delicately modeled; the mouth and chin were very firm, but the lips were full and red. The eyes in repose were a trifle languid, in animation mutable and brilliant. The brows were finely penciled, and the soft dark hair, brushed back from a low forehead, added to the general distinction of her appearance. Hedworth studied her face as he had studied it many times.

"Well?" he asked. He had an abrupt voice, suggestive of temper, and the haughty bearing which is the chief attraction of Englishmen for American women. His face was as well chiseled as the average of his kind, but lacked the national repose. The eyes were very clever, the features mobile; the tenacity and strength of his nature were indicated in the lower part of his face and in the powerful yet elegant build of the man.

"Well, what?"

"What sort of a man was this Johnny?"

"Oh, I am not very good at describing people—quite different from you—much lighter—"

"I don't care what he looked like. A man only looks to a woman who is in love with him as she imagines he looks. Was he in love with you?"

"Yes, of course he was."

"Did he tell you so?"

The delicate red in Lady Carnath's dark cheek deepened. "Yes. He did."

"Did you tell him that you loved him?"

"Yes."

"What did he do?"

"I don't know that you have any right to be so curious."

"Of course you need not answer if you don't wish. Did he kiss you?"

"Yes, he did, if you want to know. We had a tremendous scene. I went into high tragics, and, I suppose, bored the poor man dreadfully."

"He was much more matter-of-fact, I suppose?"

"Yes—he was."

"Where did this scene take place?"

"In the drawing-room one afternoon when he had walked home with me from a tea at the English Legation."

"What happened the next time you met him?"

"I never saw him again—that is, alone."

Hedworth's face and tone changed suddenly. Both softened. "Why not?"

She raised her head from the back of the sofa and lifted her chin defiantly. "I did not dare—if you will know. Carnath came along shortly after, and I took him as soon as he offered himself. Why do you look so pleased? The one was as bad as the other, only in the course I took there was no scandal."

"Which is the point. Scandal and snubs and vulgar insinuation in print and out of it would have demoralized you. How do you feel toward this man now? If he were free and came for you would you marry him?"

She shook her head, and looked up at him, smiling and blushing again.

"He is no more to me than one of the book-heroes I used to fancy myself in love with."

"Why didn't he get a divorce and marry you? I thought anyone could get a divorce in the States."

"You English people know so much about the United States! You are willing to believe anything and to know nothing. I really think you feel that your dignity would be compromised if you knew as much about America as we know about Europe. Your attitude is like that of old people to a new invention which is too remarkable for their powers of appreciation; so they take refuge in disdain."

He smiled, as he always did when her patriotism flamed. "You haven't answered my question."

"What?—oh, divorce. If a man has a good wife, no matter how uncongenial, he can't get rid of her unless he is a brute; and I didn't happen to like that sort of man."

"Like? I thought you said just now that you loved him."

"I don't think now that I did. I explained that a while ago."

"Why have you changed your mind?"

"I never knew a man to ask so many questions."

But before he left her he knew.

Edith anticipated pleasurable the sensation her engagement would make, but did not announce it at once. She had a certain feminine secretiveness which made her doubly enjoy a happiness undiluted by publicity; and, moreover, she thought that some further deference was due to Carnath. She was very happy, the more so as she had believed until a short while ago that her strong temperamental possibilities were vaulted in her nature's little churchyard. "Our hearts after first love are like our dead," she thought; "they sleep until the hour of resurrection." And she knew different now. Hedworth dominated her, had taken her love rather than asked for it, and, although he was jealous and exacting, she was haunted by the traditions of man's mutability, and studied her resources as it had never occurred to

her to study them before. She found that the outer envelopes of her personality could be made to shift with kaleidoscopic brilliancy, and except when Hedworth needed repose—she had much tact—she treated him to these many moods in turn. It is possible that she added to her fascination, but, having won him without effort, she could have rested on her laurels. He was deeply in love with her, and worried himself with presentiments of what might happen before she would consent to marry. Both being children of worldly wisdom, however, they harlequined their misgivings and were happy when together.

Fortunately for both, she was heavily-laden with femininity, and was content to give all and receive the little that man in the nature of his life and inherited particles has to offer. She was satisfied to be adored, desired, mentally appreciated, and to give. If his ego was always paramount, his spiritual demands so imperious that he appropriated the full measure of sympathy and comprehension that Nature has let loose for man and woman, not caring to know anything of her beyond the fact that she was the one woman in the world in whom he saw no fault, she was satisfied to have it so. She was a clever woman, but not too clever; and their chances of happiness were good.

And then a strange thing happened to her.

Hedworth was called to Switzerland by his mother, who fell ill. His parting with Edith occupied several hours and, during the three or four days following, his affianced protested that she was inconsolable. But his letters were frequent and characteristic, and she began to enjoy the new phase of their intercourse: the excitement of waiting for the mail, the delight which the first glimpse of the envelope on her breakfast tray gave her, the novelty of receiving a fragment of him daily, which her imagination could expand into his hourly life and thoughts. The season was over, and she had little else to do. She expected him back at any moment,

and preferred to await his arrival in town.

One evening she was sitting in her bedroom thinking of him. The night was hot and the windows were open. It was very late. She had been staring down upon the dark mass of tree-tops in the Park, recapitulating, phase by phase, the growth of her feeling for Hedworth. Suddenly it occurred to her that it bore a strong racial resemblance to her first passion, and being too intelligent to have escaped the habit of analysis, she dug up the old love and dissected it. It had been better preserved than she would have thought, for it did not offend her sense; and she gave an hour to the office. She went back to the first moment of conscious interest in the hero of her tragedy, galvanized the thrill she had felt when he entered her presence, her restlessness and doubt and jealousy when he was away or appeared to neglect her; then the recognition that she was in the hard grasp of a passion in which she had had little faith; then the sweetness and terror of it, the keen delight in the sense of danger. There had been weeks of companionship before he had defined their position; it occurred to her now that he had managed her with the skill and coolness of a man who understood women and could keep his head, even while quickened with all that he inspired. She also recalled, her lips curling into a cynical grin, that she had felt the same promptings for spiritual abandonment, of high desire to help this man where he was weak, to restore some of his lost ideals, or to replace them with better; to root out the weeds which she recognized in his nature and to coax the choked bulbs of those fairer flowers which may have been there before he and the world knew each other too well. Then she relived the days and nights of torment when she had walked the floor wringing her hands, barely eating and sleeping. She recalled that she had even beaten the walls and flung herself against them.

The procession was startlingly fa-

miliar and fresh of lineament; even the moments of rapture, which are soonest to fade, and the fitful solace she had found, in those last days, imagining what might have been.

She got up and walked about the room, half amused, half appalled. "What does it mean?" she thought. "Is it that there is an impalpable entity in this world for me, and that part of it is in one man and part in another? Is the man who has the larger share the one I really love? Is that the explanation of loving a second time? It certainly is very like—ridiculously like."

She turned her thoughts to Hedworth, but they swung aside and pointed straight to the other man. She half-expected to see his ghost framed in the dark window, he seemed so close. She found herself living the past again and again, instinct with its sensations. He had had much in his life to cark and harrow, and the old sympathy and tenderness vibrated aloud, and little out of tune. She wondered what had become of him, what he was doing at the moment. She did not believe that he had loved any woman since; he had nearly exhausted his capacity for loving when he met her.

And at the same time she was distinctly conscious that if the two men stood before her she should spring to Hedworth. Nevertheless, when she conjured his image, the shadowy figure of the other man stood behind, looking over Hedworth's shoulder with the half-cynical smile which had only left his mouth when he had told her, with white face whose muscles were free of his will for the moment, that he loved her.

"Is it the old love that is demanding its rights, not the man?" she thought. "Is it true, then, that all we women want is love, and that it is as welcome in one attractive frame as another? That it is not Hedworth I love but what he gives me? Now that I even suspect this, can I be happy? Will that ghost always look over his shoulder?"

She was a woman of sound, practical

sense, and had no intention of risking her happiness by falling a victim to her imagination. She lighted the gas and wrote a letter to her former lover—a friendly letter, without sentimental allusion, asking for news of him. The sight of the handwriting that had once thrilled her, as well as the nature of his reply, would at least bring her to some sort of mental climax. Moreover, he might be dead. It might be spiritual influence that had handled her imagination. She was not a superstitious woman; she was merely wise enough to know that she knew nothing, and that it was folly to disbelieve anything.

Hedworth did not return for three weeks. During that time it seemed to her that her brain was an amphitheatre in which the two men were constantly wrestling. She never saw one without the other. When Hedworth mastered for the moment she was reminded that he was merely playing a familiar tune on her soul-keys. She felt for the man who had first touched those keys a persistent tenderness, and during the last days watched restlessly for his letter. But she felt no desire whatever to see him again. For Hedworth she longed increasingly.

Hedworth returned. The other man vanished.

She announced the engagement, and she and Hedworth were invited to the same houses for the Autumn. Necessarily they saw little of each other, and planned to meet in the less frequented rooms and in the woods. At first they enjoyed this new experience; but when they found themselves two of a large party that seemed to pervade every corner of the house and grounds at once, and two days had passed without an interview of five minutes' duration, Hedworth walked up to her—she was alone for the moment—and said:

"Four weeks from to-day we marry."

She gave a little gasp, but made no protest.

"I have had enough of dawdling

and sentimentalizing. We will marry at your house in Sussex on the second of October."

"Very well," she said.

Shortly after she went to Paris to confer with the talent that should enhance her loveliness, then paid Mrs. Hedworth a visit in Switzerland. Hedworth met her there, and his mother saw little of her guests. Edith returned to England alone. Hedworth was to follow at the end of the week and spend the few remaining days of his bachelorhood at the house of a friend whose estate adjoined the one Lady Carnath had bought not long after her husband's death.

Several days later she was sitting at her dressing table when a letter was handed her bearing the Washington postmark. Her maid was devising a new coiffure, and she was grumbling at the result. She glanced at the superscription, pushed the letter aside, and commanded the maid to arrange her hair in the simple fashion that suited her best. After the woman had fixed the last pin, Edith critically examined her profile in the triple mirror; then thrust out a thin little foot to be divested of its mule and shod in a slipper that had arrived that morning from Paris: she expected people to tea. While the maid was on her knees Edith bethought herself of the letter and read it:

DEAR LADY CARNATH:

I have been in Canada all Summer. No letters were forwarded. I find yours here at the Metropolitan. Thanks, I am well. Life is the same with me. I eat and drink and wither. But you are a memory to be thankful for, and I have never tried to forget you. I was glad to learn through Lord Tower, whom I met in Montreal, that you are well and happy. I wish I may never hear otherwise.

Then followed several pages of news of her old friends.

"Poor fellow!" thought Edith, with a sigh. "But I doubt if any woman or any circumstances would ever make a man like that happy. There are those wretched people, and I am not half-dressed!"

Nevertheless, he again took his stand in her brain and elbowed Hedworth—whose concrete part was detained in Switzerland several days longer than he had intended. She did not answer the letter at once; it was not an easy letter to answer. But it haunted her; and finally she sat down at her desk and bit the end of her penholder.

She sat staring before her, the man in complete possession. And gradually the color left her face. If this old love, which her mind and senses had corporealized, refused to abdicate, had she any right to marry Hedworth? Now that she had unlocked this ghost, might not she find it at her side whenever her husband was absent, reminding her that she was a sort of mental bigamist? Carnath had no part in her dilemma; she barely recalled his episode.

She was as positive as she had been when the case had unrolled itself that she had no wish to see the first man again; that did he stand before her his power would be *nil*. He was a back number—a fatal position to occupy in the imagination of a vital and world-living woman.

"Is it all that he awakened, made known to me, represented, that arises in resentment? Or is it that the soul only gives itself once, acknowledges only one mate? The mind and body perhaps obey the demand for companionship again. The soul in its loneliness endeavors to accompany these comrades, but finds that it has projected itself beyond to the mate of the past. Probably when a woman marries a man she does not love, the soul, having no demand made upon it, abstracts itself, sleeps. It is when a mate to whom it might wholly have given itself appears that, in its isolation and desolation, it clamors for its wedded part."

Her teeth indented the nib of her penholder. "Was ever a woman in such a predicament before? So illu-

sionary and yet so ridiculously actual! Shall I send Hedworth away and sit down with this phantom through life? I understand that some women get their happiness out of just that sort of thing. Then when I forgot Hedworth would I forget *him*? Is passion needed to set the soul free? Until Hedworth made me feel awakened womanhood personified, I had not thought of this man for years, not even during the year of my mourning, when I was rather bored. What am I to do? I can't fling my life away. I am not a morbid idiot. But I can't marry one man if what I feel for him is simply the galvanizing of a corpse. Hedworth ought to be taken ill and his life despaired of. That is the way things would work out in a novel."

Her face grew whiter still. She had had another mental shock. For the first time she realized that no woman could suffer twice as she had suffered five years ago. That at least was all the other man's. Her capacity for pain had been blunted, two-thirds exhausted. If Hedworth left her, died, she might regret him, long to have him back; but that abandonment of grief, that racking of every sense, that groping in an abyss while a voiceless something within her raved and shrieked, resolved themselves into black fingers which wrote Hedworth's inferior position.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" She dipped the pen into the ink and put it to the paper. At least, for the moment, she could write a friendly note to this man, convey tactful sympathy, little good as it would do him. The letter must be answered.

She heard a step on the gravel beneath her open window. She sprang to her feet, the blood rushing to her hair. She ran to the window and leaned out, smiling and trembling. Hedworth's eyes flashed upward to hers.



THE LADYE ANNE

A TALE OF A TWIST

By Mary Adelaide Keeler

THE gorgeously appointed ball-room of Mrs. Ludlam was the scene of a surging, swaying mass of silk and chiffon, velvet, satin and broadcloth.

To a person not understanding the situation and afflicted with deafness, who might have gazed from the musicians' gallery down upon the gyrating crowd, the scene would have appeared ludicrous. The erratic twirls and twists and skips and dashes of the dancers; the wonderful activity of the feet and the evidently quiescent state of the brain as indicated by the blank and expressionless faces might have filled the potential deaf person with doubt regarding the intelligence of the assemblage. But to an initiated mortal with automatic ears the dulcet, entrancing, thrilling strains of "Waldteufel" and the magic propinquity of chiffon and broadcloth told a story of supreme earthly happiness.

Not so, however, of Miss Ellicott—known among her *intimes* as The Ladye Anne, as expressing more forcibly her majestic carriage and the uncompromising stiff, backward kink in her high-held neck—whose countenance was flushed with an angry light, and whose eyes snapped and scintillated and shot wrathful glances in the direction of the door, where lounged against a rosewood panel six feet of indolent masculinity.

"He isn't particularly keen after girls, you know," said the callow youth inside the glazed shirt front, whose arm surrounded her satin waist as they slid over the slippery floor. "He's a nice enough chap in

his way, but he thinks young girls awful bores; he says they're *gauches* and raw and very flat generally, you know," he concluded, with a wheezing gasp as a vigorous thump between his rounded shoulder-blades from the crook of an advancing elbow pitched him violently into The Ladye Anne.

"I hope I haven't killed you outright," he spluttered, apologetically, as he regained his equipoise and made a desperate clutch at the reeling girl, who had been knocked off her feet by the shock. "That fellow's an awful muff; that's the third time to-night he's rammed me with that cast-iron elbow of his. Now, you don't feel faint, do you?" he added, solicitously.

"No, I never faint, but I do feel a bit dizzy," she promptly answered, with her usual dignity under trying circumstances, "and I fancy we'd better sit out the rest of the dance in the conservatory."

So the youth piloted her to the door, where the satin folds of her *chic* frock rustled against the two long black spikes of broadcloth that covered the symmetrical proportions of Broughton Egerton as he calmly gazed over and beyond her at nothing in particular.

The conservatory was a nice place in which to sit out a dance, but, for that matter, so were the flower-decked stairs.

The youth and The Ladye Anne reached a settee in safety and sat themselves down. And when she had gracefully disposed her shimmering draperies to her satisfaction and had rekkinked her neck to an angle of forty-five de-

grees she took up the broken thread of her talk.

"I think he is a very disagreeable person. Over a year ago I happened to mention to Dottie Maitland that I fancied he'd be great larks, and that I'd rather like to know him. Now, I am positive that her brother told him what I had said, but in spite of the fact that I've met him hundreds of times since, he has never asked to be brought up," tossing her head with superb hauteur. "I think when a man goes to a ball," she went on, with increasing ire, "he should make some effort to repay the hostess for inviting him, and not lean against a door and superciliously ogle everybody; it assuredly shows that he lacks the sixth sense."

"What's that?"

"Social adaptability," with didactic condescension; "and if a person hasn't that he would better stay at home."

"H'm, I see. Egerton's a rather clever chap, though, if he doesn't look it. He was born in the circle, you see, and hasn't had to fight his way in; maybe that's the reason his face hasn't got that eager, striving-to-please expression that some fellows who have had rough, uphill work of it can't get off their countenances even after they're well in. The only odd thing about Egerton is that he's indifferent and doesn't care for buds. Why, I've met him at routs for five years, and 'pon my word, I never saw him do anything but hold up a door, and I've never known of his asking to meet a *débutante*. If they last four or five years he sort of feels sorry for them, and sometimes he'll come around and take them out for a twist, but not often; I've never seen him do it, only heard about it, you know."

"Then if I last half a dozen years or so he'll feel sorry for me and take me out for a twist, too?" with an unconcealed sneer.

"Can't say; he's a queer chap."

"I'm vastly glad I've four more years to go before he can feel sorry for me," snapped Miss Ellicott, send-

ing a flash from her eyes at a rapidly advancing youth.

"Oh, I say, Anne," breathlessly called the embryo man, who was her cousin, coming up to her in a flutter of excitement: "Egerton's been after me to introduce him to you—he's bent on knowing you. Will you let me bring him up?"

"No, I won't. I don't want to meet him, Dick; I'm four years too young. Come, now, run away; you are missing a lovely waltz. I'm going to sit out with Mr. Dollie till supper, and I don't want to be bothered. Run off, dear."

And, after a dazed, speechless stare at her, he ran.

"You've crushed Egerton flat," gasped Mr. Dollie, faintly.

"That's what I've been waiting to do for fifteen months," was the calm reply, as she pinned the shivering youth to the back of the settee with her glittering eye.

Four years passed over the bronze locks of Miss Ellicott and left no sign. Her neck was as stiffly kinked, her eyes as dazzling and her *tout ensemble* as smart as when, six years before, she made her bow to her mother's friends in the drawing-room at home one rainy afternoon in February. Again she was at a ball, and the shimmering satin of her frock rustled daintily about her lithe form as she was twirled and twisted over the floor by the still callow Mr. Dollie.

With an indifferent glance she looked over his shoulder at an indolent figure leaning against a door, and with an equally indifferent glance the figure looked back at her. Since the night of her celebrated refusal to have him brought up, she had several hundred times seen Mr. Egerton leaning against the different doors of different ballrooms, and they had always glanced at each other thus. Their acquaintance had never progressed further. If Mr. Egerton felt aggrieved at her snubbing, he did not tag himself to that effect.

"What do you think of that Miss Ellicott, otherwise The Ladye Anne?"

queried a man who was also leaning against the panel.

"I don't think of her at all," answered the other, drowsily, as he stared blankly into space.

"Then you're the only man in town that doesn't; she's the toast of the day."

"H'm," suppressing an incipient yawn; "she's been so a long time."

"Well, you see, if a girl doesn't go off in her second year she's apt to hang fire; she gets too deuced particular. It's rather hard to find a chap to suit her maturer fancy, whereas the teenagers snap up anything that happens to come their way."

"H'm."

"Yes, that's the way it is."

"H'm."

"Yes, I don't believe she'll ever marry, although they say she's got her eyes cocked England-ward now."

"H'm."

"It's a sort of Mecca, you know."

"H'm."

"Yes—why, look there! Gad! What a chump that Dollie is. She's down!"

And then the two men made a sprint for a crushed-up heap of satin and lace on the floor. The six-foot length of broadcloth containing Mr. Egerton arrived there first, and, slipping his hand about Miss Ellicott's waist, by a deft athletic trick of the wrist he instantly stood her upright on her feet, or, more accurately speaking, foot, for she could stand but limply.

"I hope you're not hurt," exclaimed the other man, as she desperately clutched the supporting coat sleeve of Mr. Egerton, and looked as if she were on the verge of collapsing altogether upon the near-by expanse of slippery shirt front.

"I—I—I'm afraid I am," she whispered, faintly, going a ghastly white. "It's my ankle; a twist."

Then the man, seeing that his well-founded suspicions about her collapsing were to be verified, and being punctilious to a degree, hastily introduced Mr. Egerton to her, so that she might not suffer the mortification of swooning in the arms of a stranger. And after a rather dazed recognition of the impromptu introduction and a murmuring in Mr. Dollie's tingling ear to the effect that her time had come to be taken out for a twist, she smiled sweetly and fainted with much grace.

Mr. Egerton, with a terribly bored expression—the only time, in the memory of the oldest of them present, that he ever had any particular expression—gathered up the flimsy burden and carried it to the regions above.

Then he went back to his original position against the door.

Six months afterward he married Miss Ellicott.

But now, when he goes to balls and leans up against the doors, instead of looking at her indifferently, as she twirls by him, he turns his head and looks the other way.



QUITE LIKELY

SELDUM FEDD—What would you do if you had money to burn?
SOILED SPOONER—Have a hot time, o' course!



A CLOSE CALL

SHE—Were you ever married?
HE—No; but I was once engaged to a Brooklyn girl,

A NEWPORT BACHELOR

MODERNIZED VERSION OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET LXXIII

THAT time of year thou may'st in me behold
 (Despite the art that makes me look still young),
 When yellow leaves upon my brow are hung—
 Autumn's cotillion favors, and fools'-gold.
 In me the ennui of an idle day
 Wears to a close, and I must now be drest
 For dinner, and the season's last soirée;
 My faithful valet, Death, will do the rest.
 Thou hast, no doubt, observed the transient fire
 That Indian Summer warms his chill hands by?
 And soon it serves him for a funeral pyre,
 Where dreams burnt out at last in ashes lie.
 All this, if thou *must* see, haply forget!
 And wed me, heiress—for I'm deep in debt.

HENRY TYRRELL.



EXPERIMENT IN SCIENCE

JANE—Why did Cousin Anne refuse the judge, after accepting his attentions all Winter?

SUSAN—Oh, I suppose she wished to prove that even a legal light may be turned down.



DOUBTLESS WITH REASON

SOME women wish that they were men,
 But there are more, I must aver,
 Ne'er harbor such a thought—but then,
 They often wish their husbands were.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.



A GALLANT MAN

BELLE—What did he think of my singing?
 LENA—He blamed it all on the piano.

FOR LOVE OF LORD PATRICK

By Mrs. Poultney Bigelow

THE table decorations were entirely of white flowers—lilies-of-the-valley standing in deep-green moss, and clusters of stephanotis nestling in Dresden china baskets.

The famous Havant gold plate shone out in pleasant contrast to this bridal—or funereal—effect. The light was cunningly arranged behind pink shades, while the room, with its noble black paneling, was in semi-obscurity. Van Dyck's Charles I.—one of the apparently endless collection—looked down pallidly out of the twilight, and next to him Henrietta Maria's small oval face, amid its surrounding curls, was turned meditatively upon the distinguished company. The Holbein was too far off to catch the light at all, which was the less of a deprivation to the diners as it was an unusually ugly Holbein.

Lady Havant was not modern. She thought old fashions best. It had taken a long time to reconcile her to the *dîner à la Russe*; she had had an only brother killed in the Crimea, and couldn't bear the name of Russia. Only very recently she had given way on the subject of pink candle shades, for she came of an era when a glare of light was fashionable, if not becoming. But her daughter, five-and-thirty and unmarried, had persuaded her.

"All women, you know," said Lady Amabel, "haven't the Havant complexion, mamma, and in this day of make-ups it's downright cruel to flood a person's face with light."

"If they *will* make Jezebels of themselves, my dear, I can't help it,"

said her Ladyship. "I shall not try to hide their powderings and plasterings."

She added that "appearances are nothing—only the state of the heart is important," and Lord Havant observed, plaintively, that he liked to see whether he was "eatin' beef or mutton." However, Lady Amabel carried the day, and after sunset the wearers of false lilies and roses had nothing to fear.

The air of Havant Hall was decidedly sacerdotal; the house was one that always smelt of incense. There was a priest at the table to-night, a stout German with a coarse, good-natured face and inadequately washed, stumpy hands that he folded on the edge of the table when he was not vigorously wielding his knife and fork.

Then there were the three sons of the house, who knew nothing but how to ride and how to get into debt—two accomplishments that often flourish on a limited income.

Lord Havant was, at seventy, a better man than any one of his boys, and his good-nature would have ruined him long ago but for his wife. Though she was the daughter of a marquess she knew all about Havant, from the picture gallery to the fowl-houses. She could claim acquaintance with every individual egg and knew every detail in its career, from the hen-coop to the kitchen and its final appearance in the dining-room. The dairy was her hobby, and the patent "separator" was one of the things that the guests for the "week end" went to see when they were tired of picking primroses or watch-

ing the coquettices of the peacocks on the terrace.

Among the guests was a new millionaire, who had bought a great place in the neighborhood from a starving nobleman. He was amiable and Semitic, with a quiet, pleasant-faced wife out of the other camp. He was one of the signs of the times, an object that has been added to the tables of the aristocracy since pink candle shades came in, and there are few great houses into which he fails to penetrate; sometimes he even marries one of the daughters. As he—the particular he of this occasion—was already married, it would appear that he had been invited out of pure kindness and condescension.

The handsomest face at the table was that of Sibyl Armytage. It was richly tinted, finely cut, scornful and weary. Next to her, Colonel Havant, a cousin of the house, was telling her things that bored her; for she was not a patient woman. The Colonel was an ex-Guardsman—"a fine figure of a man"—with the brain of a—well, of a Guardsman.

"I'm a Protestant, you know, Mrs. Armytage," he was saying; "a pillar of the Church, by Jove!"

Sibyl turned on him swiftly, her eyes suddenly transformed by mirth.

"You one of the pillars of the Church!" she said. "What *lordly* architecture your church must have!"

The Colonel turned purple with delight, and to this day he thinks Mrs. Armytage was, secretly, one of his victims.

"That's the first laugh I have had to-night," said Sibyl, turning with renewed indifference to the man on the other side. "I've been so bored all day!" she added, plaintively.

"There is nothing to do here, is there?" said the man. "At least, in bad weather such as we've had to-day. One can't read, for there are no books here."

"Only Bradshaw and breviaries," assented Sibyl.

"Is it that they think it wicked to read—or don't they care for it?" asked Hilary Dexter.

He was dark and good-looking, with a bold eye, and he regarded his neighbor with interest.

"Either—both—I don't know. Lady Havant is my aunt, you know, so be careful what you say."

"Why do you take it for granted that I shall say something bad? I respect my lady—as I do all the products of that effete civilization from which I have been absent so long."

"Where have you been all these years?"

Dexter raised his eyebrows.

"Where not?" he said. "It would only tire you to hear. You look sick of everything already—deadly sick," he added, thoughtfully, looking her full in the face. She went crimson, and a spark of resentment rose in her eyes.

"Do you know how you strike me?" he went on. "I've felt it all day, and it is plainer to me now than ever. You're in a state of indecision about something that will affect your whole future. You're desperate, yet you can't make up your mind. Am I not right?"

She was very pale now.

"Colonel Dexter!" she said; then, with studied insolence: "By the way, what are you Colonel of?"

He kept his temper perfectly.

"That I can't tell you; you must look in the Army List. I've been where these titles mean all sorts of things," he continued. "What I'm most interested in, though, is *you*, dear lady. I never saw a woman I liked so well—and I've seen many. You have that look of race, of courage, that glorifies a woman's beauty. I never saw one with that look before in such perfection."

"If you had, you'd have had a bodkin through your heart long ago," said Mrs. Armytage. Then she turned to the ex-Guardsman, and said: "Don't you think we're rather getting down in the social scale? My aunt has got together some curious people to-night. What with self-made gentlemen from Houndsditch, and sham Colonels from God knows where, really——"

Dexter heard, as she had intended that he should, and ground his teeth under his grizzled mustache.

"Now, I'll tell you whom I like," said Havant, "and I miss him. I wish he'd stopped on. I mean Lord Patrick. He's a typical Irishman, don't you know—blue eyes, black hair, splendid color, fine figure. Pity he's so down on his luck, and can't retrieve himself by a good marriage. He's married already, you know—old story, early entanglement and all that."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Armytage, all her insolence gone.

"Can't get a divorce, unluckily—woman perfectly straight, though she drinks—lives with her mother, who sticks to her like a leech; does trapeze business or something. Ah, well, perhaps she'll do it once too often, and set Pat free. Let's hope so."

Lady Havant was rising. His Lordship was just in the middle of a story, but that didn't matter. . . . "So I just nipped off, in time to see the fox—by Jove! a near thing, I tell you" . . . and the glistening, rustling ladies carried away their white shoulders and glowing jewels, passing under the melancholy nose of Charles I. on their way to the drawing-room.

"There's a woman for you!" said Colonel Havant to Dexter, as Sibyl left them. "Eight-and-twenty, thoroughbred, a widow, and got £5,000 a year. What a chance for somebody—for you, eh, Dexter?"

"Why not for you?" said Dexter.

The Colonel sighed ecstatically.

"Ah," said he, "she *did* say rather a nice thing to me at dinner."

Dexter smiled indulgently and held his peace.

"Aunt," said Sibyl, in the drawing-room, as the vicar's daughter began singing, "why do you have that man Dexter in the house? He's an awful bounder."

"What slang, Sibyl!" Lady Havant protested. "He's most interesting; Father Helling is converting him. I'm afraid he's been wild, but he is being led into the right way at last."

"Well, I give it up! If he's being converted—" and Mrs. Armytage went over to Lady Amabel.

"Do you like Colonel Dexter?" she asked, bluntly.

"Hush! Don't talk!" said Amabel.

The vicar's daughter was singing, "Oh, Mary, go and call the cattle home," in a voice that neither Mary nor the cattle could have heard unless they had been tethered to the piano leg.

"Does he want to marry you?" persisted Sibyl.

"No, I'm too poor," whispered Amabel. "He's stone broke, poor dear. You would suit him better."

"I wouldn't trust myself near him if I had a dagger in my hand!" said Sibyl, under cover of "The Lands o' Dee."

"Thank you, Miss Crickley. I never heard that ballad given as you sing it."

At last it was time for bedroom candlesticks. The guests had gone, and only the house-party remained. Lord Havant was openly yawning. Her Ladyship, tireless in the pursuit of duty, controlled her features and bade everyone good-night. Colonel Dexter handed Sibyl her candlestick, as they all stood in the black oak hall. His fingers just brushed hers, and he felt that she was icy.

"I wish I could help you!" he murmured. "Don't decide hastily. Wait till the morning."

She swept silently by him, up the stairs, the look of "pride and courage" on her face illuminated by the candle she carried.

II

LADY HAVANT had offered her niece the Stuart Room—the chamber in the old wing of the Hall where Charles II. had once slept; but Mrs. Armytage had refused the honor, laughingly recommending her Ladyship to save her historical apartments for Americans and Jacobites. She herself was content with two smaller,

brighter, chintz-hung rooms, that had nothing about them of what she irreverently called "venerable stuffiness."

To-night the fire blazed brightly in the sitting-room, and the plump chair drawn up before it extended inviting arms.

Sibyl, with one of the sudden impulses not unusual with her, dismissed her maid and, still in her dinner dress, responded to the invitation of fire and chair.

It was a very sad face on which the light of the flames glowed—the face of a woman who, woman-like, was pining and suffering for love of a man, who probably, man-like, was not worthy of it all. Her indignation at the insolence of Dexter was forgotten; she had much else to trouble and occupy her. It was long after midnight before she thought of going to bed. As she was turning to go into the adjoining bedroom she was startled by hearing a very light tap on the door. Her interest in psychical research had made her curious, but not superstitious, and she at once attributed the knock to human agency. After an instant's hesitation, she said, in a low voice: "Who's there?"

The door opened slowly, and she saw Hilary Dexter. He was in his smoking jacket, and its touches of color were lurid in the light of the single candle that he carried. His eyes were at once sombre and sparkling.

Sibyl's surprise was so overpowering that she stood speechless, and meanwhile Dexter entered the room and noiselessly closed the door. He looked at her with a slight, triumphant smile.

"May I sit down?" he asked.

Her first impulse, being a woman, and helpless, was to scream; but she saw in a moment that it would be the height of folly. Instead, she quickly mastered her nerves, and said: "What does this mean?"

"It means," said Dexter, "simply that I have made an appointment to see you alone."

"You might have done so at some

better time and place," she replied, amazed at herself that she deigned to parley with him.

"That is true," said he, with mock respect that made her tingle, "but I know, for some reason or other, you don't like me—"

"*Like you?*" she blazed, and further words failed her.

"That being the case," pursued Dexter, "you might have refused me this interview, and as I am leaving to-morrow—you see," he added, after a pause, "I had no chance but to disturb you in this very improper manner."

He stood smiling at her over the candle.

Sibyl faced him squarely. She hardly knew whether her rage or her curiosity was the greater. Fear had vanished.

"Ah, that look of race and courage!" Dexter murmured, admiringly. "Well worth the risk!" . . .

"Will it help your upward career in this house if I rouse my uncle and call him here?" asked Sibyl, calmly. "I can do so in a few minutes."

"I think not," said the Colonel, with equal coolness. "Lord Havant sleeps in the old wing, and your maid is safe in bed at the farther end of a corridor a long way off."

"You know that?" she cried, impulsively.

Dexter bowed. "I am a soldier—and a strategist!" he said.

"I can easily rouse someone!" she persisted.

"But you won't," said he. "Just think what an awkward situation for you! My reputation, as you justly remind me, is not a very good one, and servants never forget these things. It would all be in the *Upper Ten* next week—a villainous little sheet, but read on the sly by thousands. Be reasonable, I beg. Let us sit down—I hate to see a lady stand—and I will tell you why I came."

"Let this farce end. You are a blackguard and came on a blackguard's errand. Out with it, whatever it is!"

Mrs. Armytage stood, tall, straight

and contemptuously defiant. Dexter set the candlestick on the table.

"You won't sit?" he said, regretfully. "Ah, well, you look very handsome standing. Do you know, by a singular chance you are wearing my favorite material? Velvet is the thing for tall, beautiful women—velvet and pearls. There is nothing like them."

"Don't try me too far," said Sibyl. Her face was pale and all her muscles tense. She was like a tigress about to spring.

"Our interview is so charming that I am tempted to prolong it," said Dexter.

Sibyl looked about her almost wildly. Her hatred of the man was so great that had she found a weapon it might have gone hard with him.

"But it is late," he added, "and you must sleep. Do you know where my room is?"

"Certainly not! Why should I?" she said.

"I thought you might have seen it; you know the house so well. It is the Red Room, with the old oak, and the copy of Van Dyck over the fireplace—the room Lord Patrick slept in before I came."

At the mention of that name not all Sibyl's self-command could control her color. The shock was too great.

"What is all that to me?" she asked, with difficulty.

Dexter did not reply directly. "I wonder," he said, reflectively, "if *all* Irishmen are so careless? It seems to be an Irish trait. But no honorable man of any nationality would willingly betray a woman. I am not a saint, but I never betrayed a woman."

Sibyl flashed out: "That must be because no woman ever trusted you!"

Dexter smiled a little.

"How hard you are! I'm afraid you don't like me!"

"Tell me what you want to say," said Sibyl, "and go. What is it?"

"I want to warn you against writing to young gentlemen who leave letters in their blotters."

In spite of her nerve a little cry escaped her.

"Yes," said Dexter, sympathetically. "It is a little hard, I grant you, for a woman like you to be ruined socially by the carelessness of a young ne'er-do-well like Pat Desmond. Only think, if an *enemy* had found it!—for all rich, pretty women have enemies, you know, whether they deserve them or not."

To Mrs. Armytage the situation was becoming like something in a bad dream—the half-lighted room, the dying fire, the three flickering candles, the dark, silent night outside, her utter helplessness, and the sneering devil in black and red who stood over her and held her in his grip. She put her hand to her eyes for a moment to shut out the sight of him.

"If," she said, at length, "Lord Patrick Desmond has left one of my notes in his blotter it cannot affect me as much as it affects the man who has stolen it."

Dexter laughed softly.

"*Bon sang ne peut mentir!*" he said. "You are very plucky and you know how to 'bluff'—a vulgar word for a useful thing. But, dear lady, it will do you no good. I mean well by you, if you will only believe it—and if you would only sit down—" he pointed to a chair.

Sibyl felt so weak that she sank into it without the consent of her will. The Colonel seated himself at a discreet distance.

"Ah, that's better. Now we can talk. I want to help you. After all, no one need see this letter, you know."

She was agonizedly trying to remember what she had written.

"There is no letter," she said. "You are not telling the truth."

He laughed good-naturedly. "Upon my word," he said, "I am—this time."

"If it is so," she went on, desperately, "how can it hurt me? What should there be in my letter to Lord Patrick—"

"Much that should not be," replied Dexter. "I think there is nothing so beautiful—and so pitiful—as the love of a superior woman for an

ordinary man. Granted that love is a madness, it is a very noble madness in women."

There was a sort of sincerity in his tone as he said this.

"Let us end this interview," said Sibyl. "Tell me the worst. You think I am in your power, and you want to be bought. You are mistaken, for there is nothing between me and Lord Patrick that could hurt either him or me; but it is like your low cowardice to imagine such a thing."

He flushed a little, stung at last.

"You are at least delightfully explicit," he said, "and we may come to terms. So much the better. This letter—which I have in my pocket—" (she made an involuntary movement toward him) "yes, it is really here—is the note in which you promise to go away with Pat Desmond next week. You wrote it in a moment of passionate impulse, before you had counted the cost; but know now that it was a foolish thing to do. Pat isn't worth it. You'd hate him in a month. You are too downright and too proud to do like hundreds of women of your world—it was my world too, once. You hate intrigues, and yet you think you can't live without this boy, who, though he is a nice, handsome chap, isn't fit to tie your shoelace. So you would give up everything, put yourself in the wrong and make yourself considerably less respectable than Pat's poor little tippling wife, who swings in a trapeze and runs straight, barring the whiskey. Now, don't you think you are very foolish, Mrs. Armytage?"

Sibyl got up and walked to the bell-pull. She took the tassel in her hand.

"Colonel Dexter," she said, "I am going to rouse the house and denounce you. Uncle Havant will protect me."

Dexter came toward her and seized her wrist in a close but painless grip.

"I don't want to hurt you; but you must not ring—just yet. Reflect: You denounce me, but *I* denounce you. I am a blackguard, as you justly

observe, while you are a blameless woman in a society that is euphemistically called the best. I should hate to slander you, but poor old Lady Havant would never speak to you again; and the servants would talk, and someone would tell Pat that I was here with you in the small hours—and that you changed your mind and rang the bell—"

This last insult was too much for her.

"Oh, God!" she panted. "If I only had a knife!" She struggled to get away.

"You won't ring, will you?" he asked, as if he were addressing a child.

At last her self-restraint was broken.

She trembled violently, and drops of moisture appeared on her forehead.

Dexter saw that she was beaten. He gently freed her wrist, and turned his back for a moment to let her recover herself. He had once, long ago, been a gentleman.

Sibyl stood swaying beside the bell-rope. It seemed to her long before she could speak. When she did her voice was weak.

"Your price?" she said; "what is your price?"

"You put it coarsely," said Dexter, "but the time is short."

"You want money?" said Sibyl. "How much? I have plenty."

"Yes," answered Dexter, after a moment's pause. "I want money—but not that alone. Money alone does not give happiness, as no doubt you have discovered. I want more."

"More than money?" she asked, dully. "I don't know what you mean."

She was sitting huddled in a low chair by the fire, her velvet gown streaming abroad, her hands locked together in her lap.

Dexter came nearer. His voice assumed a lower, less confidential tone. He bent over her, and a wave of physical aversion shook her being.

"Sibyl," he said, "I want more than money; I want you."

She was stupefied.

"Oh," she said, slowly. "I would kill you if I could!"

"It seems preposterous to you, does it not?" he went on, quietly. "And yet it is natural enough, from my standpoint, that I should desire to marry you. Left to yourself you will destroy your life for the sake of this careless Irish boy, who, if he has no great vices, has at least no positive virtues. Look at me: I am not old, or ugly, or deformed. I've been a bad lot, but I have still a rag of reputation left, and I have no vices that money cannot cure. I have never been a card-sharper; I don't drink. If you were my wife I couldn't bear to look at another woman. Strange as it may seem, many a blackguard makes a good husband. I've seen the hearts of good women crushed to powder by good men who didn't understand them. If I marry you everyone will accept me, and I shall know how to maintain my position. Poverty made me a bad man—wealth will make me a good man."

Sibyl was looking at him as if fascinated by his audacity. There was something of the fallen angel in his face while he spoke. The mother whose heart he had broken, whose name he had blackened, might at that moment have known him again.

"What do you say?" he went on. "I will make you happy, I swear it. I will make you forget Pat in a month—in a week. What do you say?"

Sibyl got up slowly and faced him.

"I say," she answered, quite calm now, "that I hate to live on the same earth with you; that if I had possessed power to kill you, you would have been dead this half-hour; that I would rather have your hatred than that horrible thing you call your love."

Dexter breathed hard. He was very pale.

"Is that your last word?" he asked.

"No," she returned, "there is one word more. If you had come to me as an unfortunate, broken-down man—a ruined gambler, even—a man frankly in need of money—I should

have helped you. But you came as a blackmailer—a heartless betrayer of women—a thing too low to be touched by the foot of an honest man. And so I take pleasure in defying you; I leave you to do your worst."

Dexter was rigid.

"Madam," he said, "you have chosen. To-morrow—or, rather, this morning, for it is long past midnight—your letter shall be in the hands of Lady Havant."

"To-morrow," said Sibyl, firmly, "you shall be proclaimed for what you are."

Dexter took his candle.

"I am sorry—being what I am—that my errand has been a failure. I think that you will also be sorry—to-morrow. Good-night. Sleep well."

The door closed and Sibyl was left to rest—if rest would come.

Long before the breakfast gong sounded she was in the dining-room. The sleepless night had blanched and aged her face. When the family came in she turned her back to the light. Lord Havant kissed her in his kind, fussy way; her Ladyship wore her usual air of being engaged in the performance of an uncongenial duty. The young men were late—one was breakfasting up stairs; Lady Amabel came in yawning, and said she hadn't yet recovered from Miss Crickley and "The Lands o' Dee."

When everyone was at the table Colonel Dexter arrived. He was full of apologies for his tardiness, and assured his hostess that the sleep-giving air of Havant was responsible. He greeted Mrs. Armytage with conspicuous cordiality. While Lord Havant chatted good-naturedly and ate marmalade, Dexter took a folded paper from his hand and showed it to Sibyl, escaping the observation of the others. His seat was next to hers, and his proximity made her feel faint.

Colonel Havant was opposite, and seemed desirous, even at that early hour, of renewing his attentions to the widow. Lord Havant finished his marmalade and began to read the *Morning Post*.

"When shall I give it to him?"

whispered Dexter. "Now?—or shall her Ladyship have it?"

Sibyl made a pretense of breakfasting. Her mouth was so dry that she could hardly swallow.

Suddenly Lord Havant broke out: "Lord bless my soul! How extraordinary! Poor thing!"

"What's the matter, papa?" asked Lady Amabel.

"Very curious!" said my Lord, "and very lucky for Pat."

Sibyl sat frozen under the eye of Dexter.

"Try to express yourself, Havant," said her Ladyship.

"Why, Pat's wife fell off the trap-eze last night, and, by Jove, she's dead!"

"Lucky for him, by gad!" said Colonel Havant. "Too much whiskey, I suppose, poor girl."

Lady Amabel looked at her cousin kindly.

Mrs. Armytage was deadly white.

"That'll be a millstone taken from the poor lad's neck," said Lord Havant.

"Poor creature!" said her Ladyship. "May the Lord have mercy on her soul!"

"Happy Lord Patrick!" said Dexter. "The world is all before him. Not every blunder ends so well. Mrs. Armytage, before I forget, here's the address I promised you," and he handed her the folded paper.



PERISH THE THOUGHT!

WHEN I asked her to wait
She declared that she wouldn't;
She scorned such a fate
When I asked her to wait.
She's not wed up to date—
Can it be that she couldn't?
When I asked her to wait
She declared that she wouldn't.

S. G. S.



PLAUSIBLY EXPLAINED

DICK—By the way, old man, do you recall why Jacob had to work seven years for Rachel?

HARRY—I suppose he was saving up for a Christmas present to her.



A DRY SUBJECT

"**B**Y gad, suh, you have my heartfelt sympathy! Two thousand years—" Colonel Corkright gazed compassionately at the arid and unbeautiful mummy.

"—without a drink! No wonduh you ah dry!"

THE FASCINATING MISS ADELBAIR

By R. Leroy Thompson

THE merest trifle started the whole affair. Holly wanted to go into the grill-room because there were never any women there, but Harvey preferred the public dining-room up stairs. (He goes to the grill-room now, however.)

They pitched a penny to decide it, and up stairs won.

There is always someone in the dining-room, especially if you want to have a quiet evening; and when you know a person as well as Holly knew May, you can't pass by her smile with a simple nod of recognition. Harvey wanted to go over, anyway, because there was a very pretty girl with her. (Harvey was very young.)

"She had eyes," Harvey said. (Harvey was also very observing.)

Holly noticed that she had eyes. Also, that she had very pretty teeth when she smiled. Also, that she had a curious little scar in the corner of her lower lip—but that comes in later.

"This is my friend, Miss Adelbair," May said.

Then they both took chairs.

"Isn't she a dream?" asked Harvey, when he and Holly were finally alone in their room together. (It was very late.)

"She is quite fascinating," Holly replied, "and she *can* sing coon songs; but still, I don't like the eyes. Another thing, her mother was French—May told me so. I knew a girl once whose mother was French—it was my first year. Besides, she drank her pousse café by layers. If you take my advice, you'll drop it."

"You're jealous," said Harvey.

"I'm judicious," said Holly.

Then they went to bed.

"Don't you think," said Holly, a week later, "it looks rather queer to have her calling here so often? Of course, it's all right, but still it might look odd if some outsiders, who don't know our ways, should happen to drop in."

"She makes such nice things in the chafing-dish," replied Harvey, "and besides, it looks so cozy to see her sitting on the arm of the big chair with her mandolin. You'd enjoy it yourself if you stayed in more."

"Two is company," said Holly.

"I'll have her bring May," said Harvey.

"Not again for me. I don't know what Dever is thinking of me now, to have him come in here in the midst of all that singing and cake-walking, last Sunday! No; I think I'll go out."

"I'll have to figure more carefully next month," said Harvey. "I've run over badly. I think I'll stay away from her this week."

"But she won't stay away from you," said Holly.

"I won't take her down town afterward, then. But she's all right. She told me she expected a man to be broke half of the time. I told her it wasn't just like being broke, because I carried a cheque-book, only the pater kicked if I made him deposit too often. She is interested in cheques."

"Most girls of that sort are," answered Holly.

Then Holly went over to see Edith. Edith was his "refining influence" girl. He couldn't have got along without Edith. There are times when a man has too much of bohemianism, and has to be "refined" for

an evening. That's why he and she took their suppers together at the Astoria or the Imperial (when he wasn't broke).

He could forget the "Quarter" with her. He could forget May and the coon songs. There were always Browning and Landor.

It's strange how many weeks of bohemianism one evening of Browning and Landor will tide one over. It leaves its taste in your mouth. You don't want the Quarter again until the next morning, at least.

That's why Holly was angry when he found May and Miss Adelbair in the room when he returned. Making hot punch in the chafing-dish, too. Of course, he wouldn't drink it. It formed a bad mixture with Browning and Landor.

He was very short when he spoke to them, and sat down in a corner with his biggest medical book. He even refused to play an accompaniment for the coon songs, so it wasn't long before they went out.

Miss Adelbair ruffled his hair and kissed his ear with a little laugh when she went, but May held her head up very straight and didn't even say good-bye to him, though she said it very sweetly to Harvey.

"You've acted beastly," said Harvey. "They won't come again."

"I hope they won't," said Holly.

Then Holly and Harvey didn't speak to each other any more than was necessary for nearly a week. It was Harvey who broke the silence.

"I must let up, Holly; the pater has had to deposit twice lately. He won't again till the month is up. Besides, I think she is getting a little tiresome."

"Who is *she*?" asked Holly.

"Miss Adelbair," said Harvey.

"Let me take you over to see Edith," said Holly.

"I don't care for Edith," said Harvey. "Let's go to the theatre."

"You promised to come up last night, but you didn't," said Miss Adelbair, the next evening, when Harvey appeared.

"I went out with Holly instead," he replied.

"He is always trying to get you away from me." She put her finger petulantly into his buttonhole. (They were sitting quite near together.) "I don't think he likes me. But you do, don't you?"

"Yes," said Harvey.

"Then tell me so," she said.

"I did just now," he answered.

"Oh, tell me nicely. A monosyllable isn't nice, and besides, I want you to tell me without my asking."

He told her nicely.

"And you won't run away with Holly any more?"

"I won't run away with Holly any more."

"Nor let him prejudice you against poor me!"

"Nor let him prejudice me."

"And you don't care if I do run into the room when I'm lonesome?"

"I enjoy having you there very much."

"Now tell me something nice again," she said.

Harvey did. In fact, he told her several things in a very satisfactory manner.

Then she went over to the piano.

What she played was very popular just then, and Harvey didn't notice any allusion. He even hummed the chorus with her:

"For they never proceed to follow that light,
But always follow me."

"I'm quite sure she is getting tiresome," said Harvey. (It was a week later.)

"She still comes here," said Holly, "and—you go out."

"I can't seem to help it. I don't know how to break it off."

"There are some things that don't have to be broken with a sledge-hammer."

"There are *some* things that do. She won't take hints. I can't seem to make her understand."

"I remember her mother was French," said Holly. "By the way,

' they want a substitute at the Carney for two weeks. It will keep you away, and will still count on the school work. You'd better take it."

"I will," said Harvey.

"It's all your fault," said Miss Adelbair. (She had come alone to the room, and was making Holly very uncomfortable.) "You never liked me, and now you've got Harvey away from me." Then she sat down on the arm of the big chair and cried. The mandolin lay in the corner.

Holly never could bear to see a woman cry. That's why he found he had his arms around her—but she wasn't crying now.

"And you always did like me?" she said.

"Yes," said Holly.

"And I always liked you better than I did Harvey, only you always seemed so cold. Now, you'll take me down town, won't you? Oh, let's go to the Vin Rouge. They have such nice little private rooms down there, and their chicken *en casserole* is just splendid."

There is a fascination in sitting opposite a very pretty girl in a very private room, with something nice on the table between you—especially after the third cocktail—more especially after the third cocktail and a bottle of good sherry. At least, Holly always thought so.

"You didn't really like to have me come up to the room so much, did you?"

(They were in the private room with the table between them, but they had not got to the third cocktail—then.)

"You weren't coming to see *me*," said Holly,

"Do you care if I do?"

"I shall care very much if you don't." (They had got to the second, however.)

"And you won't be cross and ugly when we make hot punches in your chafing-dish?"

"Not if you'll let me help drink them."

"So you did like me all the time?" she said.

"Yes," said Holly.

She hummed that "Belle of New York" tune again. It was evidently a favorite of hers.

Of course Holly felt bad about it all the next morning. It was very foolish; besides, it wasn't right to Harvey. Besides, again, he had known a girl the first year whose mother was French, and he should have been wiser.

So he wrote a note to Harvey from somewhere in the country. He had an aunt in the country who was very ill, he said. She wouldn't be better till some time after Harvey's service was over.

It was very pleasant in the country—he would have stayed longer only he received a letter from Harvey.

He came back. (His aunt was better.)

"I'm in trouble," said Harvey. "My bank account is overdrawn."

"I thought you had dropped her," said Holly.

"I have. I can't understand it."

"Have you looked over the cheques?"

"No. I want you to go to the bank with me."

"This is it," said Harvey. "I don't know the person it is made out to—and besides, it isn't my signature."

"I remember that cheque," said the paying teller. "A young lady presented it."

"Can you describe her?" said Holly.

"She had a funny little scar in the corner of her lower lip," said the teller, "and—"

"I think it is my signature, after all," said Harvey. "I'll try to arrange the balance to-morrow, if you'll wait."

"It's hard to believe," said Harvey, when they were back in the room. "Still, she was here alone often, and besides, she seemed interested in cheques."

"We can get enough on our watches to make out the balance," said Holly. "It doesn't do to let things like this get out. Everybody doesn't understand the Quarter, and having a girl in your room might not look well to some."

"It would be hard to explain to the pater," said Harvey. "I'll take down the watches."



SUMMUM BONUM

IT is good to lead the hosts against the wrong,
And to hear the cheers that echo loud and long,
And to see your humble name
Blazoned on the scroll of fame
As the hero of the battle of the strong.

It is good to taste the wine of wide renown,
And to weave and win and wear a laurel crown;
It is good to bask awhile
In the sunshine of a smile
As it breaks upon the shadow of a frown.

It is good to hear a myriad voices swell
All your mighty, all your valiant deeds to tell—
But you've gained the subtlest art
When, with cheerful, willing heart,
You can play a minor part—and do it well.

WILLIAM CHANDLER BAGLEY.



A UNIQUE SPECIMEN

"QUEERMAN is an odd character, isn't he?"
"Oh, yes; strangest fellow I ever saw in my life! Although he has a golf suit he has never had his picture taken in it."



FACT AND FANCY

AH, boys, be careful how you act;
Think well what marriage brings!
She's fancy now, then she'll be fact—
And facts are stubborn things.

G. B.

WHEN MOOD REIGNS

By Ada Patterson

ONCE there lived a Man Fool and a Woman Fool. Indeed, they still live. They or their kind will go on living to the end.

Society did not call them fools. It called the man a scientist and the woman a belle. He did not care by what name he was known in society, for he was a thinker and lived apart from it as much as it would permit. She cared a great deal what it said of her and hers, because she thought but little, after the manner of women, being content with feeling. And she had lived in society always.

The two differed, yet were alike, in that within both the human, ineradicable need of living was strong.

One day, when he was in a man's mood of belief that nowhere in all the wide world was one who understood him or appreciated his worth, and she in a woman's mood of vague loneliness in a crowd, they met.

It was at a farewell dinner. Their hostess was to sail next day for a trip around the world. The Woman Fool was lovely in her gown of rose crépe, with the pink of coral about her firm throat and in her dark hair. Her brown eyes, often hard with pride, were tender this night. Her manner was chastened. She was lonely and felt the need of loving. At first she was sad and indifferent. Half the men at the table—they were all intimate friends at this dinner, the only stranger being the Man Fool—had begged her to marry them. The other half were married, but would have liked to make love to her. It was a monotonous situation until she caught sight of the Man Fool. He was new. Her eyes softened.

The Man Fool saw the softened expression. He thought of the possibilities in those brown eyes. A man might not always remain unappreciated and misunderstood.

Before the women left the table the Man Fool proposed a toast. Try as he might, he could not keep his eyes from the coral-crowned dark head or the now tender brown eyes.

"To the foe whom no man can conquer—to the friend whom no man would escape—to Love!"

Her face flushed with pleasure. Public expression of sentiment was in bad taste, to be sure, but the Woman Fool was fond of saying that she was at heart a savage, that she enjoyed the unexpected, the unusual, the barbaric.

When the men returned to the drawing-room he went as straight to her side as a plummet to the bed of the river. He called the next morning.

In two weeks they were engaged.

For a week afterward absence from each other was an almost mortal pain. Then he told her that the laboratory, which had been neglected for three weeks for her, clamored for him. The laboratory and the book that was to record the proceedings therein were jealous mistresses, he said. She pouted a little, but let him go.

Morning found him still at work after a night in the laboratory. At noon he was still moiling over his blessed retorts. In the smoke wreaths he saw an indistinct, rose-colored shape with brown eyes. Above the diabolical fumes rose the remembered fragrance of her habitual perfume.

He worked the harder because of that indistinct, rose-colored impression. When he lay down to sleep he smiled because of it. At the same moment she was frowning, because no flowers with his card attached had come for her that morning. No other man who professed to love her—mark the professed—had ever forgotten to send flowers regularly.

Besides, a woman friend of divorce antecedents had called and enlivened the afternoon, with a dissertation on the unworthiness of all men and the tremendous significance of small neglects. The Woman Fool had many women fool friends. She tossed vexedly in her rose-canopied bed that night.

"He will write if he does not call to-night," she said to the grave face in the mirror next morning. But he neither called nor wrote. He continued to moil in his laboratory and hold sweet communion with the indistinct, rose-colored shape.

On the third day she remembered that they had said nothing about announcing their engagement. True, she had not spoken of it, and he had not appeared to think of it. But he had thought of it. He was thinking of it then. He was addressing the vague, rose-colored shape.

"You are mine," he said, "and no one knows but you and me. I dread the time when the world shall look upon and cheapen our love."

The loves of men are less practical than those of women. They are more imaginative. The Man Fool was almost content. He had the rose-colored shape in the smoke. The Woman Fool had nothing but the cynical platitudes of women fool friends, who, by reasoning such as theirs, had made a shipwreck of their happiness.

On the third day of his self-immolation and moiling the scientist became less savant and more human. He smiled at the rose-colored shape. "You are getting pale," he said. "I am going to see your lovely original to-night."

By way of interruption, Herr Bracht arrived. He embraced the

Man Fool. They had studied and sung, smoked and fought together, in Heidelberg. Herr Bracht had arrived that morning. He would leave for Chicago at midnight. They would not separate until that hour, *hein?*

The Man Fool would take Herr Bracht to see his fiancée. She was divine, she—Herr Bracht growled. The Man Fool had forgotten that Herr Bracht was a genuine woman-hater. There was once a girl—but that is a different story. "They are all fools," growled Herr Bracht. "I will meet none of them."

A note arrived. "Are you coming to see me this evening?" A plaintive undertone, but the Man Fool did not hear it. "If not, I wish to make another engagement." The small warning of a rising storm. "Come, I need you." A concession, but the Man Fool did not understand.

He looked at good, gruff Herr Bracht and wrote: "My Love—The dearest spot on earth to me is by your side. That you know, but my college chum is here, a good fellow, but a misogynist. He will not let me take him to see you. Once he lopped off the ear of a fellow who was trying to puncture my heart with his sword. We owe much to Herr Bracht, you and I. I shall see you very soon. You understand."

But she did not. She cried bitterly that night, and sunk her pink nails into her palms. The next morning her mirror reflected a drawn, white face that frightened her. A woman fool whose friendship had reached the boudoir privilege stage dropped in to see her.

"How wretched you look!" said the visitor, with engaging candor. "By the way, I saw your friend who works with 'simples' at the theatre with a handsome creature last night."

The Woman Fool drew half the mass of hair her maid was combing, across her face. The maid stared in surprise. The visitor sniffed a basket of roses just arrived. They were from a trifler, but he did not live apart from society. He sent flowers to a half-dozen women every morning.

Their hearts were all tender toward him because he "remembered."

The Woman Fool threw back the hair veil from her face. She smiled. No soldier at bay ever did more heroic battle. She did not wait to hear that the "handsome creature," the physical travesty, was big, blundering Herr Bracht.

"Shall I see you at the opera?" she said. "Reggie Allison gives me a box-party to-night."

The visitor forgot the scientist and his ape-like companion at the theatre the night before. She described her new dinner gown, retailed the latest gossip about a woman whose husband was said to have "tired of her," blew a kiss to the woman before the cheval mirror and departed.

The Woman Fool drove her maid from the room, drew the shades until the apartment was of the Stygian blackness of her mood, and threw herself, face down, on the divan. The maid told callers that her mistress was "resting for the opera, and could not be disturbed."

The mistress was charming at the opera. She smiled at young Allison so often that dead hopes were stirred to resurrection in his breast.

The scientist called the next evening. He found the original of the rose-colored shape, regal but gracious, among a score of guests. She gave him an impartial smile. He found no opportunity to be alone with her. When he left there remained several guests. One was Reggie Allison.

He was conscious of a chilling disappointment. "I cannot blame her," he thought. "I hoped for one look that was for me alone. But she is an admirable hostess. She would not bestow special favor on one guest, no matter who he might be." He fell to comforting himself stupidly, by remembering her shy caresses. The memory was so sweet that, thoroughly reassured, he fell asleep smiling at the rose-colored vision in the dark.

He called the next morning, but heard that she was out. She was not expected in all day. He walked down

the brownstone steps dejectedly, but when he reached the street something recalled her tenderness of less than a week before. He straightened his shoulders, smiled, and began whistling:

For love that is true is forever—
Not a day nor a month nor a year.
To the end of the world I'll love you,
I shall always love you, dear.

Someone pushed aside the draperies of an upper window. A pale face with hard, dark eyes looked out. He had come, then, left his moiling at the laboratory, at that hour. She knew the importance of the work he had left for her. She knew the sacrifice he had made. He was not careless, after all. She would send someone for him.

"Nathalie." The maid came from an adjoining room. The mistress was looking down the street again. The man below was walking with light and debonair step. The last week had been a century to her, and he was smiling. The maid heard an odd little sound at the window. She thought it was a moan. The next instant she assured herself it was merely a cough.

"I said you should hurry with the packing. Draw the dark shades. My head aches."

The divan was not the scene of a battle this time. It was, instead, the scene of a resurrection. Hurt, almost slain, pride was nursed back to life. It strengthened and grew to gigantic stature in a day.

The Man Fool called again that evening. The butler informed him that his mistress was dining out. She would go to the theatre afterward. Where? He did not know. For the first time the rose-colored vision deserted him. He dined at the club. The chatter of the manikins about him was maddening. He called a carriage, made the rounds of the theatres and searched all the boxes with his glass. No light of brown eyes illuminated their darkness. He picked up an elegant club type of Herr Bracht. They talked together over

several bottles about women, "feeble, dangerous, mysteriously troubling creatures." The Man Fool was mostly silent. The acquaintance he had picked up talked a great deal.

He enlarged on the inconstancy of women. He said their love was of pseudo variety. They burned one moment and were ice the next. They were sublimated vanity. Only the man who ministered incessantly to that could hold their vagrant affections. They were more whimsical than children, more tyrannical than men, more irresponsible than brokers. He himself—

The Man Fool interrupted the reminiscence. He ordered the cabman to take him past the mansion that was the Mecca of all his hopes of happiness. He swore at cabby because he did not drive slowly enough past the house. There were lights in a corner room with a dainty swelled window. The Man Fool swore at cabby again.

"Didn't I tell you to stop?" he shouted.

"No, sorr, neither did you," said cabby, sturdily.

"Hilda in her tower," said the Man Fool, fondly. "Oh, it's all right. It's all right. Our engagement must be announced at once." He noticed that his hand trembled as he opened the cab door.

"What a devilish mood I'm in!" he said. He wondered why he had never noticed how gloomy his bachelor quarters were. "I shall not occupy them much longer," he said. By way of cheering himself he whistled:

For love that is true is forever.

There was a letter for him next morning. The Woman Fool had written it while he apostrophized Hilda in her tower.

"In view of the circumstances, you will not be surprised that I write to break our engagement," she said.

"What circumstances?" he inquired, dully, of himself. He went at once to the mansion, his Mecca, for light. He found darkness instead. The Woman Fool had sailed that

morning. Her stay abroad would be indefinite.

The Man Fool did not follow her. He drank much with the club type of Herr Bracht that night. He muttered, in absent moments: "What circumstances?" He nodded while his companion told how soon a woman wearis of a faithful, devoted swain. They agreed that love dies of inanition in a woman's breast. Somewhere near, robust, wrangled young love laughed scornfully at the two.

A month later, at Florence, the Woman Fool married Reggie Allison.

The hostess returned, after two years, from her trip around the world. She invited the guests of the former dinner to another. The Man Fool and the Woman Fool met again. She grew a trifle pale, but looked at him with calm indifference. He sneered a bit under his heavy mustache. They seemed to meet cordially.

"We are all here, but we are changed," said the hostess, smiling.

"You have become a Crœsus," to one, "you a statesman," to another, "and you," to the Man Fool, "the leading scientist of the age. Come, there is no glory without suffering! What has it cost you?"

"My health," said the rich man, looking discontentedly at his empty plate.

"My conscience!" laughed the statesman.

The Man Fool hesitated. He looked across the table. A face was turned with strained, unconscious attention toward him. A pair of brown eyes looked into his with eager, pained expectancy. The light broke from them on the Man Fool's two years' accumulation of bitterness and wrath.

"My—" The Man Fool hesitated. The brown eyes demanded a confession.

"Love," suggested a flippant bachelor down the line.

The Man Fool remembered those days of self-absorption in the laboratory, the ill-timed visit of Herr Bracht, and what followed.

"My love," he said, gravely, look-

ing still into the brown eyes, that had a frightened look now. Then a terrible, impotent anger seized him.

"Here's to mood!" he said, "the thing that fires the hearts of poets and women, and wrecks the hopes and lives of men."

A woman down the line of diners laughed. She had heard only a word or two, and thought it was a jest. Reggie Allison was describing the winner of yesterday's race, and had not heard. They two alone drank to the strange toast.

"Moods must have their interpreters," said the hostess. "A wise friend at such a time is invaluable."

She rose.

"Do a man and a woman who love require a board of arbitration?" demanded the Man Fool.

"Often, in the inevitable process of adjustment, before marriage," smiled the hostess, walking near the Woman Fool.

"Mood, the sublime egotism of woman!" growled the Man Fool. "A man slaves at the galley, working for the time when she shall be queen of his fame. It is all for her. She fancies herself neglected."

His voice had grown raucous. He paused.

"A man should never allow a woman to fancy that she is neglected. Then there would be no moods," returned the hostess.

A trembling voice informed her, when they reached the drawing-room, that the owner had hurt her hand.

"The thorns on the roses," faltered the voice.

"James, show the lady to the morning-room," she said to the butler. "I understand, dear; I was hurt so once," to the Woman Fool. "Mrs. Allison has a sudden headache. You must excuse her," to the other guests.

Mr. and Mrs. Allison left early. She was silent during the ride. As he assisted her from the carriage she said, in a voice that still trembled:

"I should like to take that trip up the Nile soon. Sha'n't we start at once, Reggie?"

"Ah! The mood for travel has seized you? Very well."

Reggie Allison had been called a "brainless fop" and a "cad," but he had learned long before the wisdom of bowing to the Reign of Mood.



INFALLIBLE

IF it be true that "love is blind,"
On this you may rely, men,
There's no eye-opener, you'll find,
Can cause a cure like Hymen.

DOROTHY DORR.



EASILY IDENTIFIED

MRS. VAN SCHUYLER—Bridget, are there any letters for me?

BRIDGET—One from the dead letter office, mum.

MRS. VAN SCHUYLER—Dead letter office! How do you know where it came from?

BRIDGET—Sure, and hasn't it a foine black border?

THE WOOER'S PROGRESS

HE kissed my hand the first time that we met
Respectfully and with a knightly pose;
I gave him for his coat a blushing rose—
He told me yesterday he had it yet.

Next time he kissed my delicate suède glove—
He caught it as it fell upon the stair,
And pressed it to his lips and held it there,
Much as a man might who was much in love.

And once he kissed my turbulent dark hair—
We danced together to a two-step strain;
Somehow we both got tangled in my train
It happened then. I didn't seem to care.

Last night he kissed my round and sleeveless arm.
I drew away, offended, with a flush,
And murmured something not just meant to crush;
He said he didn't think 'twas any harm.

To-day he called in to apologize,
Admitted it was stupid, foolish, rude,
He couldn't help it—thus for pardon sued.
I laughed, looked down—and then he kissed my eyes.

And now I really wonder should I be
More formal, chilling—thus reprove his nerve?
I wonder! But it's lovely to observe
How he gets on in girl geography!

KATE MASTERSON.



ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND

“**J**ONES has a new phenomenon, I understand, and expects to make big money exhibiting it.”
“That so? What is it?”
“A member of one of the *Second Families of Virginia*.”



EASILY EXPLAINED

JONES—How did Old Soak come to miss his train?
BROWN—He had only twenty minutes in which to get a drink.

LAURENCE IN LOVE

By James Raymond Perry

THE youthful Laurence wanted to fall in love again. It was certainly time, for fully five weeks had passed since his last love affair. Moreover, that last episode, besides being now ancient history, had not been very satisfactory.

Laurence was between four and five, and had fallen in love with a girl of nine. She was the youngest sweetheart he had known in the course of his whole career, and he had loved many. Their ages had ranged from fourteen to eighty-four. Then this girl of nine had crossed his path.

It was quite ridiculous. She was a mere baby, scarcely twice his own age, and yet he had quite succumbed to her charms, and for three whole days he had felt as passionately devoted to her as he ever had to the woman of eighty-four, or to any of the women of intermediate ages. But at the end of a week his devotion had diminished, and at the end of two weeks his love had paled. The sight of Rachel—that was the name of the mature lady of nine—no longer awakened enthusiasm in his heart. The stars had grown old and the sun had grown cold, so far as his passion was concerned.

There had been a sting to this love affair, too. It was a sting to pride and vanity, however, and not to love.

At the end of three weeks Rachel had informed Laurence that she didn't love him any more—as if he cared!—because she had fallen in love with another—a noble gentleman of eight years, who didn't wear long curls. There was the sting: This gentleman of eight didn't wear long

curls! Well, there would come a day and an hour when he should be shorn of his, and he could wait. His mamma liked his curls, and if Rachel didn't, that was her affair. He would rather please his mamma than Rachel. And anyhow, he didn't love Rachel any more, as he had already informed her, and the gentleman of eight was quite welcome to her company and to her affection. There would be no duel.

But nevertheless, now, after the lapse of five weeks, Laurence felt the necessity of again falling in love with somebody. He had been heart-free a long time. But with whom should he fall in love? It should not be a baby of nine; he was quite certain of that. It should be some lady who had reached a sufficient age to know her own mind. There must be some stability to his new love. The object of his affection must not turn from him to the first curl-less gentleman of eight she chanced to meet.

Feeling quite lonesome at not being in love, Laurence, entering the house one day when dusk was falling, heard the sound of the piano and someone singing, and so went into the parlor. The shadows lay quite thick, and the gas had not yet been lighted. His mamma was sitting by a window, and he went over and kissed her. He stood at her knee a moment while she stroked his curls, and then he marched away to the piano. A woman was sitting there. The song he had heard was finished, but now she was beginning another.

He leaned against the end of the piano and looked at the woman. He could see her face but indistinctly in

the dusk. Was she pretty? Certainly she must be, else how could she ever sing as she was singing now?

The tones went through him in little shocks and shivers, that were very pleasant to feel. He had never heard any person sing quite like this before. He had heard his mamma's singing, and liked it. But it had not been like this.

It grew darker, but the white fingers of the strange woman hovered over the white keys and struck the right notes as easily as if it had been broad day; and her wonderful voice soared and sank, and soared and sank, in wonderful, sweet cadences. It was like some beautiful church service, Laurence thought, only sweeter, nearer, more personal and intimate.

"She must be very, very beautiful," he thought, and strained his eyes in an effort to see her features in the shadow. But, whether beautiful or not, he would fall in love with her; indeed, he had already fallen in love with her—with her and her voice.

The song died away and there was an instant of sweet stillness—such as you may feel sometimes just after a perfect Summer sunset. Laurence moved a little nearer to the woman sitting by the piano, and then he felt her hand on his curls. Then he pressed up against her knee, and the hand on his curls fell to his shoulder, half encircling his neck with a gentle pressure, and he stood there, very still. The little shocks and thrills the song had awakened had not ceased, but went chasing one after another through his little body.

His mamma and the strange woman were talking to each other now. The strange woman had the sweetest, softest, richest voice, even in ordinary conversation, that he had ever heard. It was a voice to fall in love with, singing or talking!

Then the gas was lighted, and he saw her face. I shall not describe it to you; but you may judge whether it was beautiful or not when I tell you that Laurence felt no lightest

shadow of disappointment at sight of it. It was just the face his fancy had pictured to go with the voice.

His mamma gravely introduced Laurence to the lady—Laurence was very particular about those little formalities, and his mamma knew it—and he held out his hand and said: "I am very glad to know you, Miss Marble. I am going to like you."

All through dinner Laurence scarcely let his eyes wander from Miss Marble's face. She ate just the right way, he thought—as if she liked things, and yet wasn't too fond of them—and her gestures were just right, and not too frequent, and her voice—ah, her voice!

After dinner she played and sang some more. Laurence curled himself and his curls up in a little bundle on the sofa among the bright-colored cushions and listened in a sort of ecstasy as the tones of the woman went sweeping and echoing through the chambers of his soul.

Higher and higher the sweet sounds lifted him, till he vaguely wondered if he had not reached the gates of heaven. Yes, surely he had, and beyond the gates the angels were singing a song more wonderful than any to which mortal had ever listened. Then the drowsy eyes unclosed, and he saw it was Miss Marble still at the piano, and not angels singing.

Now he was drifting away in a beautiful ship over an ocean of moonlight, and the sounds floated after him, floating, floating, floating . . .

Then he opened his eyes again, quite suddenly. The beautiful music had ceased, but the beautiful face of the singer was bending over him close to his face. She had sunk on one knee beside the sofa and was stroking his curls, that lay on the bright cushions.

"I love you!" he said, simply, though a little sleepily.

"Do you, dear?" she asked. "I am glad you do."

"Yes, you are so beautiful, and you sing so beautiful," he said, sincerely if not grammatically. "Do you love me?" he asked.

"Yes, sweetheart, I love you!" she said.

"Will you marry me when I get grown up?" he asked.

"Perhaps. We will see," she said.

"Please kiss me," he said, and he held up two sweet little lips toward her.

Then she put both arms round his neck and held her face close down to

his, and kissed him, and his heart swelled and the little shocks and shivers went palpitating through his frame.

Once more he murmured, drowsily: "I love you," and then he felt himself sinking into something softer than soft cushions, and in another moment he had fallen from love to sleep.



WITHOUT AND WITHIN

WITHOUT—the splendor of the night,
The light-ripe stars, the jeweled snows;
Within—her bosom warm and white,
Her mouth a rose.

Without—the sleigh-bells' merry chime,
Orion's glory just above;
Within—how long the miles, O Time,
My heart, my Love!

Without—love-wingèd feet, a knock,
A pulse that beats in joyous tune;
Within—nay, Cynic, do not mock,
Her arms and June!

INGRAM CROCKETT.



INTELLECTUAL DRUDGERY

MRS. HOON—What is the matter, John? Dreaming of the future?
HOON (*gloomily*)—No; it is almost Christmas, and I am thinking of the present.



BEGINNING PROFESSIONAL LIFE

CARRIE—I suppose, now that Mr. Emdee has his diploma, he will begin practicing.

HARRY—Yes; economy.

TO THE UNKNOWN

IF thou art false, decoy me,
 Thy tamer sisters cloy me—
 Sweet traitor, I will love thee for thy lies;
 O'er pitfalls I will woo thee,
 Past torch and knife pursue thee,
 Though there were twenty murders in thine eyes.

Art thou a gypsy? Hide me
 In the dark tents beside thee—
 I'll hunt thee down the night wind on the wold;
 Amid the skins I'll find thee,
 In love's strong arms I'll bind thee—
 Thy bravos curtained from us by a fold.

Art thou a nun? Thy glances
 Fill me with old romances;
 If but thy cell be open to the stars
 I'll break in, to adore thee,
 And kneeling there before thee
 Do penance to my saint behind the bars.

Art thou a witch? Then thrill me,
 Though thy fond magic kill me,
 Pour all the lovely poison of thy soul
 Into my veins, and sear it
 With the white seal of thy spirit
 Till the moon die, and the withered heavens unroll.

Art just a woman—lying
 And lithe? Well, then, I'm dying
 To have thee cut thy microbe-trailing skirt
 Until no longer sweeping
 The rubbish it's been heaping
 In such a nauseous symphony of dirt

JOHN PAUL BOCOCK.



THE TRUTH IN JEST

“I WANTED to go out shopping to-day,” sighed young Mrs. Maddox,
 “but I couldn't on account of the rain.”

“Wanted to try to get something for nothing, as usual, I suppose,” said her husband, attempting to be facetious.

“Well, I did think of getting you some neckwear,” replied Mrs. Maddox, innocently.

LA MANGEUSE D'HOMMES

Par J. H. Rosny

LE crépuscule venait de mourir sur les collines, la lune géante se levait dans l'échancrure dentelée de deux forêts.

La terre encore chaude du jour, l'arrêt subit de la brise, les rumeurs de l'animalité nocturne, la beauté du firmament sur une terre insoumise à l'homme après des millénaires de civilisation, une fécondité implacable, farouche, vaste comme l'éther, invincible comme l'Océan, poignait, dominait, surprenait le cœur de James McCarthy, l'emplissait d'une plénitude de grandeur et de poème.

Derrière lui suivait un humble fils de l'Inde, Bavadjee le coureur, grêle, les épaules hautes et timides, taillé dans un minimum de matière, mais la tête lucide, la bouche intelligente et douce. Devant lui, Djoûna, le guide donné par le village de Nardonarès pour indiquer le gîte de la tigresse, de la Mangeuse d'Hommes qui venait d'enlever un laboureur.

À mesure qu'ils avançaient, la nuit murmura plus haute et terrible, le grondement des bêtes se prolongea sur la plaine; de grandes chauves-souris nagèrent dans la lumière orange.

Bavadjee se rapprocha de McCarthy; son effroi se compensait d'un intime orgueil à servir l'Irlandais trappu, aux prunelles belliqueuses, à la physionomie rude et bonne, irascible et affectueuse.

“Approchons-nous?” demanda James.

“Oui, maître.”

**

Au sortir d'une manière de défilé entre des rocs, Djoûna fit halte avec

tremblement. La main tendue, il soupira:

“C'est là!”

Sur une surface sinuuse se développait un de ces recoins où la majesté des forces libres, la lutte des instincts et des plantes crée la splendeur et la pourriture. La lune brodait, à travers les lianes, des dentelles sur une mare obstruée de vieilles écorces, de roseaux mi-flétris, d'algues émeraudées. Une faune sinistre rampait et fuyait sur le sol, flottait sur la lourdeur des ondes.

Partout une confusion de genèses et d'agonies, le meurtre et la fécondation occultes, des ombres sinistres et des éclosions de fleurs argentines, de fades effluves paludéens, la fine essence de plantes aromatiques.

Dans les intervalles du silence on entendait les soupirs d'une source mystérieuse, qui semblait souterraine, et la lamentation lointaine des châcats.

“Alors, c'est là?” demanda McCarthy. “Connais-tu la position exacte?”

“Un jour d'hiver,” répondit Djoûna, à voix basse, “en poursuivant une génisse égarée, j'ai vu la Mangeuse d'Hommes au bord de sa caverne.”

Il ajouta d'une voix presque indistincte, grelottant de tous ses membres:

“Elle achevait de dévorer une jeune femme! Depuis, Chandranahour, le même qui a été emporté ce soir, a été lui aussi témoin, au même endroit, d'une scène semblable.”

“C'est bien,” dit McCarthy. “Alors tu peux me conduire jusqu'au bout?”

"Je le puis," répliqua l'Hindou, avec une résignation douce.

"En marche, alors!"

Ils contournèrent un fourré; ils trouvèrent un sentier naturel, creusé par le passage des eaux hivernales. La lune, à mi-route du zénith, perçait de lueurs nettes les branchages. Les trois hommes avançaient péniblement et légèrement, avec des regards aigus vers les pénombres. Le frôlement de leurs habits contre les plantes, de leurs pieds sur le sol, se confondait à peu près dans les rumeurs de bestioles à la pâture, et dans la tremblerie légère des figuiers. Une délicatesse funèbre, une sinistre et veloutueuse fraîcheur, émanait de toutes les indécisions de l'entour. Comme une âme le péril rôdait autour d'eux, transfigurait l'aspect des choses, inscrivait partout des symboles absurdes et pénétrants.

Bavadjee et Djoûna, à l'approche inévitable de la périple, tombaient dans une sorte d'hypnose. Les prunelles élargies, la pensée mi-éteinte, ils marchaient comme des somnambules, tandis qu'en McCarthy, la volonté, les nerfs, la raison se livraient une vive bataille. Mais l'accoutumance de ces minutes terribles ne rendait pas douteuse sa conduite; il croyait en la fermeté de son bras, la lucidité et la précision de sa prunelle. Le cœur plus rapide, il ressentait aussi la vigoureuse volupté des hommes braves, l'électrique allégresse d'une lutte où ne pouvait se mêler aucun regret.

Comme il ruminait ces choses, à la manière peu analytique des hommes d'action, il vit Djoûna tressaillir et se tourner vers lui.

"Nous y sommes—cette éclaircie derrière le bloc de pierre."

Ils s'arrêtèrent. James prit un des rifles qu'il avait laissé porter à Bavadjee pour avoir le bras plus souple et plus assuré au moment suprême. Sans un autre mot, ralentissant le pas encore, tous trois atteignirent le bloc et s'agenouillèrent. Une broussaille fine s'interposait devant eux et suffisait à les rendre invisibles; mais en avançant la face, on pouvait apercevoir les moindres détails de l'éclaircie,

à peine couverte de plantes basses, et qu'éclairait une flaque de lueur aussi vive que la lueur d'une grande lampe dans un appartement. Doucement McCarthy se pencha par-dessus la pierre et approcha le front de la broussaille.

Son âme s'empplit d'horreur innombrable.

Vers le milieu de l'éclaircie, à dix mètres, au bord d'un repaire formé de blocs superposés, se profilait la forme de la bête souveraine, la colossale tigresse accroupie. Entre ses griffes monstrueuses, le laboureur Chandranahour. Il n'était pas mort, il ne semblait pas blessé même, ou du moins pas grièvement. L'œil percant de l'Irlandais voyait ses paupières s'ouvrir et se refermer par intervalles assez longs, et sa poitrine palpiter comme une poitrine de passereau pris au piège. La tigresse le fixait d'une façon indolente, les prunelles micloses, telle qu'une chatte fixant la souris. Et, comme une chatte, il vint un moment où elle lâcha la proie, où elle s'effaça dans une pose de négligence, de feinte inattention, de grâce dormeuse.

L'Irlandais, le rifle à l'épaule, n'osa tirer; une révulsion de colère, de pitié, de navrement, rendait sa main mal sûre.

Deux épouvantables minutes coururent.

Puis lentement, lentement, Chandranahour bougea, étendit les mains, se souleva sur les coudes. La lune éclairait en plein son visage décomposé par les affres d'une terreur immense; l'attouchement de la mort avait raidi sa bouche, rempli de stupeur et agrandi démesurément ses pupilles.

Il tourna la tête vers la tigresse. Elle semblait regarder ailleurs, dans une indifférence absolue de la présence de sa proie, ensommeillée. Alors Chandranahour se mit à ramper, en décrivant une courbe lente, et réussit à franchir deux mètres environ. McCarthy voyait approcher le visage livide du misérable et de nouveau remit le rifle en joue. Par malheur, un mouvement de Chandranahour rendit

impossible toute intervention ; sa tête s'interposait dans la ligne de visée.

"*Damn it all!*" murmura James.

Cependant, encouragé par la persistante indifférence de la Mangeuse d'Hommes, le laboureur se mit à ramper plus vite. Une navrante espérance éclaira ses prunelles, mais pour s'effacer aussitôt ; il entendit la bête se mouvoir.

Brusquement, elle prit son élan, bondit. L'homme se laissa couler contre terre, cataleptique, de nouveau entre les pattes géantes, face à face avec les crocs pâles et les grands yeux terribles.

"Elle joue !" murmura Djoûna, qui s'était avancé auprès de McCarthy.

"Oui," dit l'autre, "elle joue, la damnée brute !"

Des ténèbres étaient sur son âme. Il vit grandir, dans une apothéose lugubre, la bête qui, en notre ère encore, domine l'antique Hindoustan, qui, plus que dévoratrice de l'homme, ose s'en amuser comme d'une bestiole.

Dans l'épouvante du moment, il entrevit, que par quelques forces subtilement déplacées, par un peu plus de ruse encore, jointe à la terrifiante vitesse et à la musculature des tigres, par un rien d'esprit d'association, le règne du félin eût été possible. En même temps monta dans lui un esprit de vengeance, un violent vouloir d'abattre la Mangeuse d'Hommes sans la tuer, de la tourmenter et de l'insulter, et de lui faire subir la suprématie de l'être dont elle faisait sa proie depuis six ans.

Du calme !

Par degrés, il obtint que son cœur battît moins vite, que la colère cessât de brouiller ses pupilles.

Cependant la tigresse, avec un murmure, avec des gestes légers et prestes, retournait Chandranahour sur le sol, goûtait âprement la joie de domination et de puissance.

Le pauvre homme, recroquevillé, semblait quelque infime herbivore, maigre et frêle et sans défense sous la reine des jungles et des forêts.

Elle, blasée, bientôt voulut reprendre le jeu suprême, recula sans hâte, frémissoante de volupté, tous ses mouve-

ments empreints du défi des forts aux faibles, symbole âpre, souple, élégant, du combat pour vivre.

Quand elle fut à deux yards, elle se tint immobile, ses prunelles d'ambres s'entre-fermèrent. Elle exprimait la parfaite certitude, la volupté de ce repas vivant que bientôt elle se résoudrait à faire, la sinistre magnificence du muscle triomphant.

Pourtant le vaincu ne renonça pas à l'espérance. L'instinct de vivre battit invinciblement au fond de sa prunelle, et domina la conviction que tout effort serait inutile. Après un instant d'incertitude, et absolument comme la première fois, il se redressa, il recommença sa fuite rampante—Calvaire d'angoisse, d'épouvante et d'humble énergie !

McCarthy, cette fois, avait reconquis tout son sang-froid. Il laissa s'écarter Chandranahour de la ligne de visée, et resta hésitant une seconde entre la prudence qui voulait qu'il frappât au cœur et le désir ardent de punir la bête.

Enfin la détonation éclata. Dans le nuage de fumée on vit la silhouette de Chandranahour dressée et la tigresse hurlante, une patte brisée, qui se relevait en une courte stupeur.

"Courage !" hurla l'Irlandais.

Déjà il avait franchi le bloc d'abri.

Chandranahour s'élança, la tigresse fit un bond court et rapide. Elle n'eut pas le temps de recommencer, une balle de James lui brisa net une autre patte. Terrassée, impuissante, avec son grondement redoutable et ses larges crocs, elle restait un effroyable emblème de la force. Chandranahour, réfugié derrière le vainqueur, avait, dans l'cessive joie de la délivrance, perdu l'usage de ses muscles. Il s'appuya au bloc de pierre, en stupeur, soutenu par Djoûna. McCarthy prit son deuxième rifle des mains de Bavadjee et fit trois pas vers la bête.

Elle tenta de se soulever, ou du moins de ramper vers l'Européen ; elle avança sa tête monstrueuse, ses mâchoires dévoreuses de chair humaine où tant de vertèbres s'étaient broyées, tant d'existences anéanties.

Elle retomba sans force, et James la contemplait avec une satisfaction vengeresse et cruelle. Il lui semblait qu'elle comprenait à présent la puissance de l'homme, que désormais elle n'oseraient plus, même libre, prendre sa proie dans les villages, ou tout au moins qu'elle tuerait hâtivement, avec frayeur, comme on tue un trop dangereux ennemi.

"Maître," demanda Bavadjee, "tu ne vas pas la tuer?"

"Non, je la veux prisonnière! Chandranahour, êtes-vous blessé?"

"Non, seigneur, un peu faible seulement!"

Il vint s'agenouiller devant l'Européen et lui baissa la main avec humilité. Une gratitude et une admiration infinies brillaient dans ses grands yeux noirs.

"Bien, bien!" dit James avec attendrissement. "Crains-tu de rester avec moi pendant que Bavadjee et Djoûna iront chercher des cordes, de la toile, une civière et des porteurs?"

"Ah! seigneur, je me sens plus en sûreté auprès de vous que derrière une triple muraille de bronze."

"En ce cas, Bavadjee, tu peux partir. Ton rifle est-il en ordre? Bien! Va!"

La nuit, sous le ciel si pur, devenait fraîche. Le firmament buvait la chaleur, la plaine devait être glaciale. Mais dans le bois demeurait une tiédeur charmante, une atmosphère de rêve, légèrement assoupie par l'expiration carbonique des arbres. La lumière tombait comme une neige d'atomes. Des étoiles très pâles nageaient sur le zénith profond, sur les lacs impénétrables de la voie lactée. McCarthy s'était assis sur une grosse racine d'arbre et contemplait la tigresse blessée. Par moments, il avait quel-

que pitié, un frisson de miséricorde suggérée par la splendeur nocturne; mais en se retournant, en voyant Chandranahour encore tout blème de son épouvantable aventure, tremblant à chaque grondement de la tigresse, la colère de James remontait plus forte, pareille à la haine contre un sacrilège.

* *

Quatre heures plus tard la bête était captive. Des liens entrelaçaient tout son corps. Un réseau de bambous l'enfermait dans une sorte de cage très basse. Les hommes de Nardonarès se pressaient tout autour. Elle leur semblait formidable encore, avec une grandeur de déité souveraine, de déité pareille aux forces meurtrières, aux sinistres puissances de la maladie et de la mort dont l'Inde a fait d'innombrables entéléchies.

L'un l'autre, ils s'encourageaient; ils se rassuraient surtout de la présence de l'Européen, et, au moment où les porteurs s'apprêtaient à enlever le monstre, un veillard s'avança:

"Te voilà réduite à l'impuissance, Mangeuse d'Hommes, te voilà courbée et captive. Un homme t'a vaincue! Tu connaîtras la suprématie de notre race, tu hurleras derrière les barreaux d'une cage, et les petits enfants riront de ta fureur! Tu t'en iras de ville en ville, tu verras du haut des charriots passer la jungle et la forêt dont tu ne connaîtras plus jamais les délices! Ta vie sera une humiliation profonde, parce que tu as profané la noblesse de nos frères et que tu t'es jouée de leurs angoisses!"

La bête gémit, débilitée par la souffrance, et les Hindous crurent que, dans sa substance obscure, dans sa cervelle étroite et féroce, elle reconnaissait la suprématie de l'homme.



ONLY TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

MISS INNOCENCE—Did their friendship end in marriage?
MR. WILEY—Yes; but they renewed it after their divorce.

ON THE PARIS TRAIN

By Henry Seidel Canby

BENEATH the vaulted ironwork of the railroad station a great number of little-windowed carriages were emptying and filling, or bumping from track to track before fussy little engines. Nervous, scurrying crowds filled all the platforms, departing trains shrieked warningly, porters hustled great trucks toward the vans, regardless of crying children, and bag-laden tourists wandered aimlessly through the confusion, trying phrasebook questions on unsympathetic guards. Little piles of stray luggage formed eddies—small oases in the crowd—and one of these served to shelter a rather desolate figure of a man, huddled between a hamper and a packing-case. He was meagre, unmistakably American, but lightly stamped with the cosmopolitan seal of the artist, and, appropriately enough, he held a half-unwrapped picture in his arms.

A plump little market-woman elbowed, basket and all, into this refuge, peered over his shoulder at the painting, and felt her good-natured heart moved to pity by the picture of a lean-faced young man painting desperately at an easel, with a gnawed crust beside him and death in his eyes.

"Crude, very crude," said the man on the hamper, softly; "I should have done this very much better today, when I am half-starved myself." At this the market-woman snorted "*Anglais!*" and pushed away, disgustedly.

Just then there was a movement and an opening in the crowd, a scurrying of porters, and, gliding sinuously along the platforms, the Paris

train swept in. He watched it until the shiny little engine and half the string of carriages with names of far-away mountain places on their sides had passed him, then joined the rush for compartments, holding the painting, his "last asset," as he called it, away from the buffets of the crowd. A glimpse of a half-familiar face frightened him from the first compartment. He entered the next, bowing, after the Continental custom, to the young girl he distinguished in the half-light, discovering, too late, that she was an American, who would not understand. She was trim-bred and clear-faced, returning his salute gravely, to his relief, and betraying no embarrassment. As she did so a haunting likeness about her eyes started him into melancholy remembrance, and he seated himself so that he might study her unobtrusively.

The guards slammed the doors, the engine hooted, and they glided from the noisy station. In a minute they had left the town and raced above a stream and green, French meadow-lands.

"Do you know," said the artist, "I think I shall speak to you, if only to say that we must be together here for four hours and might as well make the best of it."

The girl dropped her book and smiled a little doubtfully.

"I can assure you that I am respectable," he continued; "I am an artist, and that accounts for my clothes; but otherwise I am quite harmless. Arnold Duncan is my name."

"I never noticed your dress," the girl said, reproachfully, "and I am

not at all conventional. You needn't apologize, Mr. Duncan."

"Thank you for that," said the man. "You don't know how much a poor fellow who must live in this heathen country enjoys a talk with a girl from home. I told you I was an artist; won't you let me sketch you while we talk?"

"Gracious!" cried the girl, "I'm plain; you can't want to sketch me!"

"Someone has been deceiving you," said Duncan, gravely; "and besides, 'headed,' you are very much like an old friend of mine whose face I often drew."

"Thank you!" said the girl, and arranged herself among the cushions. She smiled at him mischievously as he sharpened his pencil, and when he began to draw. "Now!" she cried, "tell me about this girl. How long have you been in love with her, and where does she live, and is she very much prettier than I?"

Duncan gasped and then caught the smile. "That's a remarkable string of questions," said he. "Did I look in love when I spoke to you?"

"Don't evade," the girl retorted. "Tell me, has she many sweethearts?"

"Since you are sure of the girl and of her prettiness, it would be safe to say 'Yes.'"

The girl smiled a little. "Assuming that," asked she, "what are you doing over here, with all your rivals helping her to forget you?"

"Did you ever hear of starving artists?" he answered. "We might assume, for a pretty story, that I am one, and dare not go to her."

"Poor starving artist, have a chocolate peppermint."

He allowed himself to take two, in deference to his hunger, the last good meal being merely a matter of remembrance.

"I shall show you," said he, "my idea of such a man," and, bending, he unwrapped and held up his picture.

"It is very good," she said; "very good and very sad. Nearly all the best of art is sad; I wonder why."

"Perhaps pathos is the commonest background," Duncan answered.

The girl still pored over the picture. "What a desperately hungry look in his eyes," she said, softly. "I half-fancy that you were your own model for the face, but not for the eyes. Your eyes are not like his."

"I may have painted falsely," he responded, grimly. "You remember that I am assumed to be desperate and famished. Do my eyes show nothing?"

"Nothing," said she. "How foolish you are! But I had almost forgotten our game. Tell me now why you dare not go home."

"Let us take the man in the picture," Arnold said, sketching as he talked. "He has certainly few hopes for the future. Suppose that he ran away to make something of himself, and now, in honor, dare not go back to let the girl learn to love his worthless self again."

"And he loved her?" asked the girl.

"Through and through."

"And she loved him?"

"Well," said Duncan, strangely hesitating, "he never knew by words, but supposed that she loved him."

The girl thought for a minute or two.

"Your man is wrong," said she at last. "He is very noble, but a little selfish, after all. He does not think of the girl with a heartache out there at home. If he left her and told her nothing, perhaps she does not understand; perhaps she thinks he went for pity—and nothing could be worse than that."

"But the man's honor," Duncan exclaimed. "I do not think you understand that."

"I cannot understand selfish honor," she replied.

"But if he has failed in life?"

"Failed?" said she, scornfully. "A man who has won the love of a good girl has not failed. If the man were you, and that picture your last grip on success, don't you think that a word of love from her would give

you courage? Don't you know that the thought of you working for both would be sweeter to her than everything else in the world? What has honor to do with all that?"

Duncan leaned back and spoke with affected carelessness. "Perhaps our man is real, after all," said he; "and I think if I should tell him what a woman has said about his case, there might be a way to happiness for them both."

"Oh, I hope so!" cried the girl. "If I give you my card will you promise to tell me if it should happen?"

"Indeed I will," he answered, "and instead of a card you shall have my name on this sketch I have made of you." He cut it out carefully from the wrapping paper and handed it to her.

"How strange," she said, and turned to catch the fading light. "This is like me, but it is Marjory's face—Marjory Elliot."

Duncan dropped the half-wrapped painting, and an expression half-eager, half-ashamed, came into his eyes. "Do you know her?" said he. "Why, she—"

"Is the one I looked like, of course," cried the girl. "But—and she caught her breath, "you—you aren't in love with her?"

"I am the starving painter," said Arnold, gaily. "I am going to make complete confession, because you have helped me so much."

But the girl's face stopped him. "Haven't you heard?" she almost whispered. "Oh, how sorry I am for you! Why, I am going home now to be her bridesmaid."



KEEPING HER PLEDGE

SHE was wilful and very much set in her ways
When once a resolve she got into her head;
To each suitor planned she objection would raise;
"I'll marry whomever I please!" so she said.
And, hearing of this declaration, with main
And might I went wooing, and won her, you see,
Because I assured her, and made it quite plain,
'Twas I held her pledge, since she clearly pleased me.

R. F. G.



BADLY CRUSHED

THE Modest Toque stood aghast.
"Trimming of vegetables?" she exclaimed. "Now wouldn't that make you late!"
"The very latest, I believe!" replied the Fall Hat, with hauteur.

INSPIRATION

WHY do I struggle up the rocky hill,
 Without a murmur, to the summit snow?
 Because you, singing, journey with me still,
 And cheer me as I go.

Why do I tread the thorn and stubble field
 Without one look of hidden pain that shows
 Because among the thorns you have concealed
 The sweet, consoling rose.

Why do I fail, look up again, and try
 Like one who wears a laurel, freshly set?
 Because your patience is as slow to die
 As Failure to forget.

Aloysius Coll.



REASONABLY EXPLAINED

CASEY—I wonder whoi they call thet drink “absint’?”
 O'Rourke—Take three or four, an' ye'll be gone to the wurrld
 Thet's whoi.



A PAUPER

IT was a hungry little heart
 That sought for food from day to day,
 But only found, from plenty round,
 Crumbs that the others cast away

Ah, me, the hungry little heart—
 What wonder that it groped and cried!
 When such a bit had done for it,
 'Twere shame it went unsatisfied.

G. P. T.



CHRONIC CASE

“ HAS your wife complained very long?” asked the doctor.
 “ Ever since we were married,” replied Meekly, sadly. “ Nothing
 suits her at all!”

THE LOVE TEST

Anonymous

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MRS. VARDON, 68. *A widow in deep mourning. Fine diamonds at throat and ears, handsome rings; small, ladylike; soft, gentle manner; affects invalidism.*

BELLA VARDON, 40. *Her daughter. Dressed without taste, but neatly; trim, a trifle nasal, authoritative in manner; inclined at times to rant.*

ERIC VARDON, 35. *Her son. Usually wears light rough bicycle suit, knickerbockers; boyish in appearance, fresh complexion, frank, pleasing manner.*

MRS. NORTHROP, age —? *A widow. Very handsome; distinguished, tall, graceful figure; in mitigated mourning.*

A PRIVATE drawing-room in the Grand Hotel, Rome. A table set for three persons. MRS. VARDON in black crêpe robe de chambre, BELLA VARDON in walking costume.

BELLA—How much longer do you intend to wait?

MRS. VARDON—I am expecting him every minute.

BELLA—It was just the same thing yesterday. The question is, do we breakfast at half after twelve or at one?

MRS. VARDON.—At half after twelve.

BELLA—I am hungry.

MRS. VARDON—Of course it's that woman.

BELLA—He seems to have become her lap-dog.

MRS. VARDON (*irritably*)—Don't speak so of your brother.

BELLA—I've done five galleries and seven churches this morning. I've earned my breakfast.

MRS. VARDON—It is fatiguing to think of it.

BELLA—It does take it out of one. I'm all on edge.

MRS. VARDON—You look peaked. I don't like that hat.

BELLA (*moving to a mirror*)—What's the matter with it?

MRS. VARDON—It ages you.

BELLA (*sighing*)—I'm afraid that's time, not the hat.

MRS. VARDON—At your age I looked very young. Your papa—

BELLA—What! at forty?

MRS. VARDON—Are you forty, my child? Is it possible!

BELLA—Yes, an old maid. You would have it so.

MRS. VARDON—Is that a reproach?

BELLA—No, dear mother, it is a statement.

MRS. VARDON (*decidedly*)—You would have been most unhappy with the Colonel.

BELLA—So you insisted.

MRS. VARDON—And the Professor was out of the question.

BELLA—Why?

MRS. VARDON—Because he was dirty and poor.

BELLA (*laughing*)—Flattering description of my best young man!

MRS. VARDON—And the Colonel's nose looked as if he drank.

BELLA—There was Harry Blake. He was not dirty and poor, and he didn't drink. But it was always the

same thing. You needed me, dear mamma, and I stayed.

MRS. VARDON—A good child. Mother-love is best. I am nearly seventy, and it never failed my children.

BELLA—No!

MRS. VARDON—All I ask is that they should be contented and happy—near me—in their home.

BELLA—Home seems rather ambulant just now. Where will it be this Summer?

MRS. VARDON (*decidedly*)—Dr. Grocco says I must have Carlsbad—the waters for my sciatica, and the air for my bronchitis.

BELLA—It's a horrible place, but of course, dear, if you require it—

MRS. VARDON—I require it. Here it is quarter after one, and Eric has not come!

BELLA (*crossly*)—It is unpardonable—with your delicate stomach! Shall I ring?

MRS. VARDON—Give him five minutes more.

BELLA—I shall eat the candles.

MRS. VARDON—He seems infatuated.

BELLA—It is incomprehensible.

MRS. VARDON—Yes, he is such a devoted son generally. Her influence is pernicious.

BELLA (*pondering*)—I wonder how old she is?

MRS. VARDON—No doubt much older than Eric.

BELLA—With that type of woman it is hard to guess. Her figure is eighteen.

MRS. VARDON—I'll write to your uncle; he knows everybody's age and income.

BELLA—I fancy her income is greatly reduced.

MRS. VARDON—They were horridly extravagant. The papers were quite full always of descriptions of her gowns. I dare say she ruined her husband. In fact, I think I heard so.

BELLA—He speculated.

MRS. VARDON—I am glad Eric is out of that temptation.

BELLA (*a trifle contemptuously*)—Naturally, a man of leisure, supported

by his mother and traveling in Europe, is not subjected to the whirlwinds of Wall Street.

MRS. VARDON—Do you think she dyes her hair?

BELLA—It is a pretty color.

MRS. VARDON—I have such a horror of women who dye their hair!

BELLA—I'm getting so gray you must be satisfied with me.

MRS. VARDON—Gray! Really? I don't see it.

BELLA—And so is Eric.

MRS. VARDON—What! That baby?

BELLA (*laughing*)—Oh, mother, you forget we are middle-aged. And here he is!

(ERIC VARDON enters.)

MRS. VARDON—Look at the clock, my son. What excuse have you?

ERIC (*laughing*)—How many times must I tell you never to wait?

BELLA—You used to look upon your meals as sacraments, but since—

MRS. VARDON—Where have you been?

ERIC (*vaguely*)—Bicycling.

MRS. VARDON (*anxiously*)—You look shockingly overheated.

ERIC (*drying his forehead*)—Whew!

(The waiter enters and serves breakfast. They sit at the table.)

BELLA—We supposed you were with Mrs. Northrop; she always makes you late.

MRS. VARDON—Were you?

ERIC (*laughing*)—Am I obliged to give an account of every moment?

MRS. VARDON (*whimpering*)—Don't you love me any more, my son?

ERIC (*kissing her*)—Why, mother, what a foolish idea!

MRS. VARDON—You seem so changed—no consideration; all day away from your mother and sister. So *distrait*—when we speak to you, you hardly answer.

BELLA—I was almost starved.

ERIC (*coldly*)—Your own choice.

BELLA—You know mother is an invalid. Grocco said she must never wait.

ERIC (*to his mother*)—Are you suffering?

MRS. VARDON—My leg is painful and my breathing difficult.

ERIC (*wearily*)—What place next?

MRS. VARDON (*cheerfully*)—Carlsbad.

ERIC—I may take you there, and then run away for a month.

MRS. VARDON—What! leave me?

ERIC—A few weeks.

MRS. VARDON—These separations add so much to my expense.

ERIC (*wincing*)—I do it on my own allowance.

MRS. VARDON—Your uncle writes that times are very hard.

ERIC (*laughing*)—As usual.

MRS. VARDON—It worries me terribly when you are absent.

ERIC—Why, mother mine, with your large income—

MRS. VARDON (*fretfully*)—Large! Large is comparative. I have heavy burdens.

BELLA—Your son and your daughter.

ERIC (*under his breath*)—More fool they!

MRS. VARDON—What did you say?

ERIC (*boldly*)—I said, “More fool they!”

MRS. VARDON—What do you mean?

ERIC (*rising, stands before the chimney, with his hands in his pockets*)—I mean that I, for one, am sick of my slavery!

MRS. VARDON—Eric!

BELLA—Eric!

ERIC—Yes. And the sooner you know it the better. I have made a mess of my life, but it's not too late.

BELLA—Grocco said mamma was on no account to be agitated.

ERIC (*going on, regardless of her recklessness*)—My God! I am about ill with it myself!

MRS. VARDON (*in an extinguished voice*)—Let him speak; if it kills me it is no matter!

ERIC (*bitterly*)—Kill you, mother! It would take a stronger man than I am.

MRS. VARDON (*her eyes on the ceiling*)—What does he mean?

ERIC—I mean that such an existence as mine makes of a man an effeminate milksop.

MRS. VARDON—And after all my sacrifices! Was I not a good mother?

BELLA—Eric, will you hold your tongue?

MRS. VARDON—It is all that woman.

ERIC (*laughing*)—You know, really, this is too ridiculous! If by “that woman” you mean Mrs. Northrop, you make idiots of yourselves.

BELLA—Do you call your mother an idiot?

ERIC—If you would mind your own affairs, and leave me alone for a half-hour with my mother, I should be obliged to you.

(BELLA, with a toss of her head, flounces out of the room.)

MRS. VARDON—You have offended your only sister.

ERIC—My only sister will have to remain offended. I wish to speak with you.

MRS. VARDON (*coughing, and putting her hand on her heart*)—Well, what is it?

ERIC (*very gravely, moving a chair to his mother's side*)—Will you listen a moment while I go over the past?

MRS. VARDON (*declaiming*)—When have I not listened to my children?

ERIC—You have been a good mother to us. You have nursed us faithfully when we were ill. When I went to college you left New York, to bury yourself in a university town, that I might not miss the influences of home. My father had peculiar ideas. You and he carried them out. Heir to millions, I was told when I left college that it was quite useless for me to go into business, take up a profession, or any serious and lucrative career. I asked you earnestly then to give me a sufficient sum to start in affairs—a salaried office seemed a folly for a man who some day would be rich. I went to my uncle. He was the Socratic member of the family. He only laughed at me. “You are in clover,” he said; “stay and browse. You can waste time at work as well as at play. I manage the estate that you are to inherit. You go and play.”

MRS. VARDON—And he was quite right. He is so clever.

ERIC (*raising his hand in depreca-*

tion)—Wait! I have yielded in everything. For ten years I have dragged about European watering-places—a life I hate—

MRS. VARDON—Since when?

ERIC (*embarrassed*)—Always. Of course, one gets what pleasure one can. But an American who accepts such a life is a zero. He has no honor in his own country, less than none over here. It may do for handsome women—for a man it is demoralizing and despicable.

MRS. VARDON—Many would envy you.

ERIC—Perhaps. To be supported by a woman, even when she is one's mother, is not enviable.

MRS. VARDON—I have given you a life of leisure—luxuries—

ERIC—But have never made me independent. I was too good-natured. I admit, if I had a salient characteristic it was indolence. I was bright-witted, and got through college creditably, with only surface study. I never really worked, and I never had to rough it like other boys. You were always there. What I needed was to be pushed out into life, not coddled. My worst faults have been fanned. Sometimes I feel in my veins the languor of these useless, idle years. Why, I don't even read any more. We go from one of these confounded places to another. What is a man to do but drink, gamble and—?

MRS. VARDON—Eric! *My* son is a gentleman!

ERIC (*wearily*)—Yet a man.

MRS. VARDON—My son never could descend to low vices.

ERIC—. . . !

MRS. VARDON—Why are you silent?

ERIC—What do you think are the lives of most of our compatriots who dawdle in European casinos?

MRS. VARDON—I know there are dissipated men, but *my* children—

ERIC (*gently, taking her hand*)—Oh, my pure, simple, good mother!

MRS. VARDON—You speak a new language. Certainly your poor brother—my sainted Louis—was incapable of an evil thought.

ERIC—Poor Louis was an invalid.

MRS. VARDON—From where do you draw this discontent? My health, my pleasure, were always your first thought.

ERIC—They will always, my dear mother, be my solicitude. But—er—there are other sentiments beside the filial one, and discontent may be noble.

MRS. VARDON (*laughing cynically*)—Love, I suppose. What does it amount to?

ERIC (*mischievously*)—You have been married. You have had—us. You must know.

MRS. VARDON—. . . !

ERIC—Let us stop splitting straws. I want to marry. I want independence.

MRS. VARDON (*coldly*)—And pray, who is the favorite now?

ERIC—One with whom you could find no fault. You well know that I have never looked twice at any girl or woman that you and Bella have not instantly decried her.

MRS. VARDON (*rising, agitated*)—Name this paragon.

ERIC—A paragon she is—a lady; clever, distinguished, beautiful (*hotly*). With her I might amount to something, get out of this rut of stupidities and inanition. She is one of those women who gird on a man's sword and send him forth to battle.

MRS. VARDON (*icily*)—You are quite poetical. I suppose you mean Mrs. Northrop.

ERIC—I mean Mrs. Northrop.

MRS. VARDON—Do you tell me you desire to marry a woman old enough to be your mother?

ERIC—You are mistaken. I believe she is older than I am, but—

MRS. VARDON—She dyes her hair.

ERIC—A lie!

MRS. VARDON (*sobbing*)—Oh! oh! oh!

ERIC (*going to her side*)—Mother, dear, you make this so hard for us both.

MRS. VARDON—She is frightfully extravagant.

ERIC—We'll not discuss her. Since it is to my family's advice I owe my dependence, it is, unfortunately, to

them I must come for assistance. I love this woman. We will not talk of her, please. All I must know is, what income will be mine if I ask her to marry me?

MRS. VARDON—Have you the audacity to expect me to help you ruin your future?

ERIC—I have no future that is not linked with hers. You know nothing, it seems, of passion. Or, at seventy, is it forgotten?

MRS. VARDON—You are mistaken. I loved your father. We were very young. On our faces there were no lines of time. We didn't care for each other like connoisseurs who know artifice with which to allure, but like two children that every fresh emotion astonishes. It was all happiness, and as love should be. My freshness attracted him. How can you care for the tricks of a worn-out coquette?

ERIC—I am glad you found early what many never reach. It should make you lenient, not hard. One thing is certain: If you or Bella ever at any time say one word, or look it, in depreciation of Mrs. Northrop, I shall leave you instantly. I can pick up a living somewhere. I have stayed with you because you were alone and an invalid. I have arms and legs, and I can use them, as many better men have done. Think over what I have said to you. It is final. If she will smile on my unworthiness, I am hers.

(He picks up his hat and leaves the room.)

MRS. VARDON—I'll stop his income! She's a designing person!

II

A private drawing-room at the Hôtel Royal, Rome. Prettily arranged tables, laden with photographs, books and flowers; étagères with bric-à-brac, some plants, a screen, an open piano; many cards and notes on an escritoire, where are writing materials. Five o'clock. Mrs. NORTHROP, trailing black tea-gown heavily embroidered in

jet, with jet combs in her hair, bare throat and arms bare from the elbows, long jet chain on which hangs a lorgnon; large black feather fan. Tea-table set, with kettle boiling, cups and cakes.

MRS. NORTHROP—I hope he will come. To see him alone I sent away the Prince. It is certainly extraordinary that I like this lad. He has none of the qualities I admire in men. He is aimless and has no ambitions. He has amiability, which I consider a form of vulgarity. I fancy he must be very weak. Yet vacillating natures have sometimes invincible energy when a fixed idea possesses them, and I think Eric, in the right hands, might be aroused and improved. Would it be an interest in my desolate life to lead him into better things? Diotima of Mantinea was an inspiration to wise men. I should like to instruct this foolish one in many things of which I believe him ignorant. Innocent he is not. He has opened his heart to me. But of such women as I am he has known little. To him I think love has meant foolish philanderings with silly little girls, or—well, he is perhaps fairly cleanly, as men go. Mary Lea says his mother's a fool, and avaricious. She looks a gentle person enough, yet those little women in black, with large eyes and small noses, are generally mulish. I can feel instinctively that she hates me. The sister, too, who is a frump, looks askance at me. How amusing!

(Moves to the mirror and examines herself.)

I am looking well. To change one's nature takes time. He may be obstinate, which means stupid. He is not really young, although he seems so to me. What if I tested the fibre of which he is made? It need bind me to nothing. I—

(ERIC is ushered in by a servant. Frock coat, gardenia in his buttonhole.)

ERIC—What luck to find you alone!

MRS. NORTHROP—It isn't luck. It's my force of character.

ERIC—And “character is destiny”—a trite saying.

(She sits on a small sofa, he on a seat near her; leans one arm on the table.)

MRS. NORTHROP—Yes, it is trite. I used to think it true, but have changed my mind. It's other people's characters, not our own, that muddle up our fate.

ERIC—Well, to-day, at least, the muddle yours has made for me is altogether delightful.

MRS. NORTHROP—Thanks for your gratitude. I sent away Prince Gori, Mary Lea, Sylvia Oddie and Delci. It was not easy.

ERIC—You've had all these visitors?

MRS. NORTHROP—*E altro!*

I have been to a meet on the Massimo's drag—the only feminine thing on top who was not a princess or a duchess. We breakfasted on the Campagna, and I am only just in my tea-gown.

ERIC—What a belle you are!

MRS. NORTHROP—Yet I intend to give up the world.

ERIC—It will never give you up.

MRS. NORTHROP—I am too unhappy to go into it with any pleasure. I had a cry all by myself behind a haystack at the meet.

ERIC—Why are you unhappy?

MRS. NORTHROP—Do you ask it? I am lonely, and I am useless.

ERIC (with feeling)—Never that!

MRS. NORTHROP—Oh, I am not posing. I have felt lonely all through life. But reasons I don't care to discuss, even with you, Eric—

ERIC—Thank you.

MRS. NORTHROP—I feel as if I knew you well enough now to call you by that pretty name of yours. Reasons, I say, that concern only me, decided me to leave America—

ERIC—Oh, speak of yourself to me, beloved—

MRS. NORTHROP (startled, yet smiling)—You advance quickly.

ERIC (gently)—Does it hurt you to have me call you so? Did you not know that I have cared for you for years?

MRS. NORTHROP—For years?

ERIC—Fifteen years ago, a boy out of college, my uncle took me one day to your house. I remember how ter-

ribly you snubbed me. You wore a gown all white, with lace and fur, and pearls. You were beautiful—to me the most lovely woman I have ever seen. You were having tea by the fire with Mrs. Oddie and Mrs. Lea. I was relegated to a corner. You just said, "Will you have some tea?" and then ignored me completely. You all talked at once about some tableaux. I didn't talk, but I had eyes and ears, and I saw and heard.

MRS. NORTHROP (*interested*)—Fancy!

ERIC—But, of course, you have forgotten it.

MRS. NORTHROP—Frankly, I have; absolutely.

ERIC—And the times I spoke with you in stammering terror at balls, or stopped to say one word in the opera lobby! I didn't dare come into your box.

MRS. NORTHROP—Well, you see, I was a *lionne*, and you just a little young man.

ERIC—The little look at the great. And I admired you as I never have admired any other woman.

MRS. NORTHROP (*dreamily*)—How very odd!

ERIC—So, let me say, beloved—now—always—(*rises and approaches her. Speaks lower and passionately.*) Near you my heart, my body, suffer. But far from you my soul simply perishes—

MRS. NORTHROP—Dear boy!

ERIC—Ah, I am no boy. I am a man to adore you and be your servant.

MRS. NORTHROP—I am older than you are.

ERIC—My mother was telling me this morning of her and my father's idyl. They were mere children when they first loved. They were engaged several years.

MRS. NORTHROP—Why?

ERIC—My father was without money, then. My mother's father was rich, but (*laughing*) stingy—

MRS. NORTHROP—Ah, I wish my father-in-law had been stingy, instead of a spendthrift. I'd have more now.

ERIC—He at last gave his consent,

and an income. When my mother chatted of it all, I felt how puerile, how insignificant, such love must be. She spoke of their young faces without a line. Ah, what is that expressionless beauty, compared with the ineffable seduction of faces that have the impress of feeling—of suffering—?

MRS. NORTHROP (*laughing*)—Eric, dear, you are encouraging my wrinkles. But tell me more about your mother.

ERIC (*smiling*)—I am called a devoted son. They say devoted sons make good husbands.

MRS. NORTHROP—If there's anything I particularly hate it is a devoted son.

ERIC— . . . !

MRS. NORTHROP—Had I a son I should wish him to kick me into the corner, and to trample me to pulp if I stood in his way.

ERIC (*laughing*)—In other words, you would wish him to be a conqueror.

MRS. NORTHROP—Yes. Conquerors don't bother to pick up people.

ERIC—Your love would be unselfish.

MRS. NORTHROP—Is the other kind love at all?

ERIC—My mother thinks she has given her whole life to me.

MRS. NORTHROP—I wasn't thinking of her life. What has she made of yours?

ERIC—You are severe. But the rebuke is merited. I take it not for her, but for myself.

MRS. NORTHROP—Your acceptance of the position—I really speak without knowledge; I have not pried into your arrangements—showed weakness.

ERIC—Every obstacle was thrown in my way.

MRS. NORTHROP—And now?

ERIC—Now I am furious at the chain. Do you not guess why?

MRS. NORTHROP (*coldly*)—You speak in riddles.

ERIC—Do you not guess the tortures that my lack of independence is to me now?

MRS. NORTHROP (*lightly*)—Why don't you go out into the world, then, and conquer it?

ERIC (*uncomfortably*)—What could I do?

MRS. NORTHROP—What have you done?

ERIC—Nothing for ten years but follow my mother about in search of health. She suffers from sciatica and bronchitis.

MRS. NORTHROP—And her sciatica and her bronchitis are your career.

ERIC (*fidgeting*)—It's been about that.

MRS. NORTHROP—And she considers herself an ideal parent! I have no patience with it.

ERIC—She is a good woman.

MRS. NORTHROP—I should call her wicked.

ERIC—Tell me what to do. Show me the way.

MRS. NORTHROP (*rising*)—I must dress for dinner. Will you pardon me? I dine with the Buonsignori. We will discuss your case another time.

ERIC (*springing up*)—It is I who must beg your pardon. (*Stoops and kisses her hand.*) To-morrow? Oh, I implore—

MRS. NORTHROP (*disengages her hand, hesitates*)—Very well—yes. At eleven we will walk on the Pincio. Meet me at Caesar's Bust. *Au revoir!*

(ERIC leaves.)

MRS. NORTHROP—Words, words, words. I wonder what he would *do* for me. To be afraid of any step is to be afraid of one's self. He has a delicate heart. A delicate heart springs from perfect taste. Ardent, too. He charms me. Well, to-morrow morning I shall give him his test. If he fails me—ah—

III

The Vardons' drawing-room at the Grand Hotel. MRS. VARDON, BELLA; walking costumes; eleven o'clock.

BELLA—I have just seen Eric galloping to the Pincio.

MRS. VARDON—Galloping? On horseback? Through these crowded streets; on their rough pavements! He'll have a fall.

BELLA—Mother, you must be crazy! On his feet!

MRS. VARDON—Ah!

BELLA—And at the Piazza del Popolo Mrs. Northrop dismissed her victory, and I saw her sailing up the road to meet him.

MRS. VARDON—What were you doing?

BELLA (*a trifle bitterly*)—Not going to a lovers' tryst, certainly. Such things have been nipped in the bud in my case.

MRS. VARDON—Do you reproach me?

BELLA—You married.

MRS. VARDON—My children lately accuse me of this as of a crime.

BELLA—Well, at any rate, there they were—and are. That's the important.

MRS. VARDON—I shall simply decline to go on with his allowance. I won't see him commit suicide.

BELLA—I must say she looked very pretty.

MRS. VARDON—She's a handsome woman and, no doubt, brilliant.

BELLA—And distinguished, one must acknowledge.

MRS. VARDON—But years older, and most extravagant.

BELLA—And in our family extravagance is not a prominent trait.

MRS. VARDON—I shall at least never let my children come to want.

BELLA—It will be rather humiliating for a man of Eric's age to have his rations stopped.

MRS. VARDON—Let him come to Carlsbad with us, then, and give up this folly.

BELLA—Do you suppose he has offered himself?

MRS. VARDON—How could he think of such a thing on his few hundred a year? Why, he couldn't keep her in garters. I suppose she imagines I mean to give him his share of my property when he marries her.

BELLA—She doesn't know you, mam-

ma. She'd better stop chasing that hare!

MRS. VARDON—You have expressions!

BELLA—She wears the slightest mourning, covers herself with jet.

MRS. VARDON (*pulling a long face*)—And after ten years I have never shortened my veil for your papa or my sainted Louis.

BELLA—It used to be the fashion.

MRS. VARDON—There is no fashion about deep feeling.

BELLA—I don't know.

MRS. VARDON—I distrust her. She has weaned my son from his affection for me—for us. She is breaking up our circle.

BELLA—You are jealous, mamma; own up!

MRS. VARDON—Jealous!

BELLA—Yes, it is your nature, darling.

MRS. VARDON—You cannot understand a mother's heart.

BELLA—Yet, mamma, I side with you. I detest her.

MRS. VARDON—That is excessive. She has not hurt you.

BELLA—She has such a self-conscious manner, really, as if apologizing for being so much finer than anyone else—quite condescending. And you are excited, which Grocco said was bad for you. You know very well I gave up long ago any thought but of you.

MRS. VARDON—Kiss me, my daughter.

BELLA (*kisses her. A pause*)—Do you wish Eric never to marry?

MRS. VARDON—What an idea! On the contrary, I look upon marriage as a man's duty.

BELLA—To whom?

MRS. VARDON—Why, to—to—posternity.

BELLA—Oh!

MRS. VARDON—It is a serious matter, however.

BELLA—So it seems with us. Other people get it over easily. What are your ideas?

MRS. VARDON—A fresh young girl about twenty, ingenuous and refined, pretty (*smiling*)—Eric admires

beauty; men will have it—of good birth, well-mannered, deeply attached to him, a first, pure affection, with—er—some fortune. It is always best that a woman should have pin money.

BELLA—Yes, and what does *she* get?

MRS. VARDON—Why, Eric, of course.

BELLA—Ah!

MRS. VARDON—Why do you say “Ah!” and stare?

BELLA—I only thought perhaps this ideal—girl might want something else.

MRS. VARDON—Something else?

BELLA—Yes, an English duke, a Blenheim; an Italian prince and his fiefs, or one of our men with millions already in his hands.

MRS. VARDON—Well, but—Eric—

BELLA—Cannot make her a duchess or a princess.

MRS. VARDON—Empty words.

BELLA—A matter of opinion.

MRS. VARDON—She would love him—

BELLA—Sometimes you say love, too, is an empty word.

MRS. VARDON (*impatiently*)—You do pick one up so!

BELLA—I think marriage would be a safeguard for my brother.

MRS. VARDON—A safeguard?

BELLA—Men who lead his life are the prey of adventuresses.

MRS. VARDON—Where could *my* son meet such creatures?

BELLA—at Monte Carlo, at Carlsbad, at Aix, at all the places where he plays baccarat.

MRS. VARDON—He has assured me he never loses.

BELLA—Losing is not a family propensity.

MRS. VARDON—You make me anxious.

BELLA—Well, I've seen those women after him.

MRS. VARDON—What!

BELLA—Making eyes at him.

MRS. VARDON—They are quite shameless.

BELLA—Speaking to him.

MRS. VARDON—I am sure *my* son did not answer them.

BELLA (*grinning*)—I stood by. He couldn't very well.

MRS. VARDON—Do you mean to intimate that if you hadn't been near he would have parleyed with them?

BELLA—I shouldn't be surprised.

MRS. VARDON—Such a thought makes me shudder. I feel quite ill. The world seems topsy-turvy. A mother's part is full of perplexities.

BELLA—Has Eric talked more to you?

MRS. VARDON—He demands capital; says he will leave me forever if it is denied. He got dreadfully angry. Has not addressed a word to me for two days. Blames his uncle. No wonder I am upset!

BELLA—if you hold fast he'll come round.

MRS. VARDON—I sometimes fear not.

BELLA—I know him.

MRS. VARDON—I thought I did.

BELLA—He likes his bills paid.

MRS. VARDON—They always were.

BELLA—Now, dear, go and rest. You look quite white. Your health is the paramount question.

MRS. VARDON (*as if struck by a new thought*)—I wonder if it is!

IV

On the Pincio. ERIC, light, rough suit, knickerbockers. MRS. NORTHROP, smart black costume, chic toque, gardenias at her belt. They walk up and down, then sit on a bench.

MRS. NORTHROP—What a delicious day!

ERIC—All days are so to me near you.

MRS. NORTHROP—I got your note, Eric, late last night.

ERIC—Is there hope for me?

MRS. NORTHROP—Let us sit down and have a talk.

ERIC—Yes.

MRS. NORTHROP—You tell me the exact truth, and I respect you for it.

ERIC—It is your due.

MRS. NORTHROP—You ask me to marry you, but you tell me your for-

tune is insufficient, unless your mother will consent to make you independent. That there is lots of money—in sight, but that you yourself are poor.

ERIC—I haven't the brass to ask a luxurious, exquisite creature like you to share poverty with me; and I am certain I can bring my mother round.

MRS. NORTHROP (*haughtily*)—To me?

ERIC (*laughing*)—Don't feel hurt. It is very flattering. She is insanely jealous of you.

MRS. NORTHROP — Jealous? I thought jealousy belonged but to one emotion.

ERIC—It seems there is a variety.

MRS. NORTHROP—So—she finds fault with me! Out with it!

ERIC—There is no fault to find.

MRS. NORTHROP—I suppose she harps on my being somewhat older.

ERIC— . . .

MRS. NORTHROP—Well, I am.

ERIC—A little . . . perhaps.

MRS. NORTHROP (*sadly*)—Alas!

ERIC—My angel, if you knew how I worship you, how beautiful you seem to me! (*Reverently kisses her hand*.)

MRS. NORTHROP—Listen! Prince Gori asked me to marry him yesterday. He is seriously attached to me, it seems. Old enough to be my father—age will not matter—unless, indeed, to me. (*Sighs.*) But I don't like him. Why, I don't know. I never could bear men who had thick eyebrows. They frighten me. I'm always afraid he's going to bite me. He is, in fact, milder than milk. I wish to be civil, as he has been kind to me, so, instead of saying "Scat!" I named the sum of my *dot*. Of course, I expected to see him flee—vanish in smoke. Not in the least. He actually wants *me*. The monster stood firm.

ERIC (*piqued*)—At his age . . . ridiculous presumption!

MRS. NORTHROP—Princes at least make princesses of us.

ERIC (*netted*)—Oh, if that's what you desire, I'm out of the field.

MRS. NORTHROP—Don't be so peppy; let me have my say. You

know what my life has been. I have exhausted the world. People said I was made for it. I have tasted all, and I believe, Eric dear, that love is best. Your love is precious. I trust in it. We each have a little money. I am no longer very young, but I am full of courage and of energy. I have thought it might be pleasant to go out hand in hand into a new and untried life. Not in one of these worn-out lands—the refuge of the defeated—but to grow into some progressive civilization. I am tired of churches and convents, and high walls and flat-roofed villas, and doubt and decay and fraud, and I don't even care for a country house in England, except for the amours of the natives. I long for wide, wind-swept plains, limitless horizons, a large, free life. Why do they call the march of democracy Imperialism? What nonsense! We could help some struggling community to rise with what we brought into it of refinement and civilization. You would be recognized for what you are—an intelligent, honorable gentleman. You would be sent to make the laws. If there were wars I would buckle on your armor. . . . I would follow you. . . . You would at least die on my breast.

ERIC—Ah, to be with you is to breathe more rarefied air. It gives one wings.

MRS. NORTHROP (*shaking her head*)—Do not answer me to-day. Take time. It means the shaking off of your habits of years. It means some hardships, some effort. We should both have to renounce much.

ERIC—It is no sacrifice for me, but for you—!

MRS. NORTHROP—If it is my choice, then . . .

ERIC—(*rapturously*)—Oh, my beloved!

MRS. NORTHROP (*rising*)—I know this is peculiar. But yield to my caprice. Do not come to me, or see me, for twenty-four hours. Then just write me one word, "Yes," if you so decide. No vagueness. That will be sufficient. If you think it unwise, be equally frank; say "No." And

now, adieu. My carriage is at the foot of the hill. Don't accompany me. I prefer to go down alone. (*Moves away.*)

ERIC—What heaven! . . . But my mother shall yield. And then I can at least give this woman I love not only my life, but what is her birth-right.

V

The Vardons' drawing-room. ERIC,
BELLA and Mrs. VARDON.

ERIC—I have no secrets from Bella, and she can remain.

BELLA (*piqued*)—Thanks!

ERIC—I have come for a final explanation. I have asked Mrs. Northrop to become my wife.

MRS. VARDON—God help us!

ERIC—He is helping me. She will make a man of me.

BELLA—Look at mamma! You are destroying her.

ERIC—All I now ask is that you give me a modest competence, a chance to make my own way.

MRS. VARDON (*angrily*)—Not a penny!

ERIC—Mother, you cannot so humiliate me. Have I ever thwarted you? Remember what a son I have been.

MRS. VARDON—To throw you into the arms of that painted—

ERIC—Stop! or you will repent your words.

BELLA—You are killing our mother.

ERIC—What would you have done had your son been a drunkard, running after harlots, ruining himself at play? Yet this is the atmosphere into which you drag me. What do you think men are made of? Do you really believe they live like monks? Do you know many that do? And here I have an opportunity of a nobler existence, of some hope, some joy, and you deny me. (*Sits and covers his face with his hand.* MRS. VARDON falls back on the sofa. BELLA leans over her.)

BELLA (*ranting*)—Matricide!

VI

ERIC, BELLA.

ERIC—Did mother faint?

BELLA—Very nearly. Her heart is so weak.

ERIC—My little sister, this is a cruel box I am in.

BELLA—Of your own making.

ERIC—Oh, the hardness of women!

BELLA—What fun have I had in life?

ERIC—I never interfered.

BELLA—No, you didn't care enough.

ERIC—Why are you so down on a fellow?

BELLA—You are an ass!

ERIC—How?

BELLA—You can't go out and make your living; you have no business ability, no habits of work, no enterprise. Why, you spend on cigarettes what you would have to live on. Mrs. Northrop is charming, no doubt; but a woman nearly, if not over forty is soon fifty and sixty, and you'll have an elderly woman on your back to carry. If you think mamma difficult, she'd be far more so—an undisciplined character.

ERIC—The present is enough. Why bother about the future? It may never come. If it does it's bound to be nasty. It is as well, at least, to have some present pleasure, some aim, some affection.

BELLA—My dear Eric, your theories are magnificent, but they don't hold water. You are unfit for what you propose to undertake.

ERIC—But if my mother would give me an income—

BELLA—Well, she won't. I know her. Why, she hardly gives me enough to dress on decently.

ERIC—Her parsimony is increasing with the years.

BELLA—Poor dear!

ERIC—Was ever rat caught in such a hole!

BELLA—I suppose the rats, or birds—particularly the male ones—ought to fly out of the parent nest. It is the law. The Professor used to say

this to me, but mamma wouldn't let me listen. A lot of grown-up people living together invariably quarrel. It wasn't intended. You have been a fool.

ERIC—Yet you wish to keep me steeped in my folly.

BELLA (*hopelessly*)—It is too late! It is in our bones. We can't fly now. Our wings were clipped.

ERIC—Speak for yourself. Mine are sprouting and lusty since I have been near . . . her. I'm sick of being the poor relative of my rich mother.

BELLA—Pshaw! Wait till your beloved's first wash-bill comes in!

ERIC—Oh, the depleting philosophy under which all my life I have been stifled!

BELLA—You have taken pretty kindly to the stifling. Why did you stay?

ERIC (*with emotion*)—Don't taunt a man who's down. It isn't generous.

BELLA—Well, I must go to mother. You've put her back a year. (*Goes out*.)

ERIC (*alone*)—I wonder how old my beloved is! She looks young. She has been accustomed to wealth, and it will certainly be hard for her to live in squalor. I don't see exactly what she expects me to do. A place in some bank or broker's office, in some Western town, is not—inviting. She is romantic. (*Fretfully*.) Women do raise the devil! I don't know how much or how little we could get along on. It would take some years for us to scratch up anything. We would be old before we got there. At our age there is no time. That sort of thing is very pretty at eighteen. Bella is long-headed, though sour. I have no taste for politics, and I am not very soldierly (*laughs*). I wonder what I have a taste for! This wandering life has knocked all ideas and ambitions out of me. I feel weary and dull. I think I'll take a

nap. I don't have to write her a letter for another twelve hours. Something may turn up before then. I wonder, if I make to her the greatest of all sacrifices—that of herself—at least for the moment—until I see my uncle—if she'd misunderstand? Women generally do. Heigh ho! (*Lies down on a lounge and sleeps*.)

VII

MRS. NORTHROP's drawing-room. She sits by the fire alone. White peignoir, pearl girdle, large white fan.

MRS. NORTHROP (*looking at the clock*)—His letter does not come. The twenty-four hours are up, and more. I feel cold. I wonder—

(*A waiter with a note on a platter*.)

MRS. NORTHROP—What will it be? (*Opens and reads*.)

MY DEAREST:

I think we had better wait—wait until I have consulted my uncle. All can, I hope, be arranged. Trust me.

Yours forever,
ERIC.

(MRS. NORTHROP turns the letter twice over, then throws it into the fire, pushing it toward the flame with her foot.)

MRS. NORTHROP—Pah! (*Goes to her desk. Writes*.)

It was a test of character. You have failed. It was "Yes" or "No." You have chosen. I would not marry you now if you came to my feet with millions. Farewell.

(Places note in an envelope, seals and directs it. Her head then falls to her arm on the desk. She weeps.)

Oh, my young lover, my young lover! You were so sweet, so dear to me!

SERVANT (*with a card*)—Prince Gori, madame.

MRS. NORTHROP (*hastily drying her tears*)—Ask him up.



A BACK BAY TRAGEDY

By Dorothy Eastman

MISS CAROLINE COOLIDGE was twenty-nine. She could not complain that she had not had a fair chance, for her three younger sisters had been kept in short skirts and "pig-tails" long after their contemporaries wore demi-trains, but at last one by one they had been permitted to seem grown up and to make their début into the great world. Miss Caroline had therefore been shoved aside, and made to believe that matrimony, and matrimony alone, would relieve her from disgrace.

But had she not for the last ten years tried to capture a suitable mate, and failed? Why, then, now that her allowance for that most precious of all bait, clothing, had been reduced, in order that her sisters might have finery; now that no parties were given in her honor, and, worst of all, now that crows' feet were gathering around her eyes—why, then, should she hope to be more successful? Miss Coolidge looked at the matter quite seriously, and decided the trouble was that she had always been too great a snob. The men of her own exclusive little set had, so many of them, married Philadelphia girls or gone away, and her stock of male callers had become so diminished that she determined to look for her affinity in a less fashionable circle.

But how was she, who had scarcely a bowing acquaintance outside the four hundred, to discover a new set of men, less used to dining, wining and dancing, yet sufficiently presentable to be uplifted by her hand?

"It must be through some girl," she said to herself, "that I shall meet them—through some girl in a differ-

ent set, who will invite me to her parties."

It was with some misgivings that Miss Coolidge contemplated the words "different set," for she had always proudly felt that her little world was the only world, that one might as well invite one's milliner to dinner as to mingle with Newbury Street or the south side of Commonwealth Avenue. Was it not pleasanter to sit at home and watch her sisters fly forth in ball dresses than to contaminate herself with a world that was not her own?

Her idea of exclusion was so strong within her that she had never realized that more than half a dozen families lived in a block of houses. Of course, she admitted that there were mortals existing behind all the doors and walking, perhaps, on the street, but, as they were never seen in society, Miss Coolidge thought they might as well never have been born. Lately, however, since she had found herself a Cinderella, sitting at home with her parents five nights out of seven—she, whose engagement book had once been packed—since she had learned to realize that with the four Misses Coolidge in society she was not the one most often chosen, she craved, at any cost, to see the title "Mrs." on her calling card. Thus it was that Caroline persuaded herself to seek the society of one Miss Gertrude Taylor, a young woman whom she knew in Summer, when they were neighbors, but seldom saw in Winter, when they were still nearer neighbors.

Accordingly, on Thursday, which was Miss Gertrude Taylor's day at home, Miss Caroline Coolidge honored her with a call. It was Caroline's

turn to have her mother's brougham, and the knowledge that she had adorned the sidewalk with a liveried footman made her feel an added right to be patronizing. Although there were several other callers, she found no one whom she knew; however, she was in a gracious mood, and chatted amicably with them all. At last she said:

"Oh, Gertrude dear, won't you come to luncheon with us next Sunday at half-past one? No one but ourselves, but I think we shall all be at home."

Miss Coolidge felt that she was conferring such a tremendous favor on her hostess, whom she had never before asked to cross the threshold of her city house, and even in the country had never asked to a meal, that she was convinced she must be leaving Miss Gertrude in a flutter of delight.

After disposing of a dozen or more cards Miss Coolidge went home, where she at once bravely told the family of next Sunday's guest. Just as she expected, her sisters cried:

"What on earth struck you?"

"Why," said Evelyn, the second sister, "when we were making the list for that big tea which we never gave, you objected to having her asked even to that."

"Well, I've changed my mind about her," Caroline sheepishly replied, for she would not on any account have had her sisters learn of her matrimonial project. "I think that, as she is a neighbor of ours in Summer, it is only right that we should take a little notice of her in Winter, too."

"I agree with you," exclaimed Mr. Coolidge. "Gertrude Taylor is a mighty fine girl, and you'll do well to see something of her."

Caroline, who usually felt a little irritated when her father advised her to associate with some nice girl beyond the limits of her own set, and was apt to respond with the suggestion that although their chambermaid was a nice girl she scarcely would do at one's table, now welcomed his speech with delight.

The matter was, therefore, easily arranged by Miss Coolidge, who would have been strangely surprised if she could have heard Gertrude's family telling her that she ought not to lunch with people who had for years given parties without inviting her. She would still more have marveled if she could have heard Gertrude indifferently saying: "It was easier to accept than to refuse. I don't care one way or the other about going, but I don't wish to quarrel with anybody, particularly people whom I have to see in Summer."

Thus, when Sunday came, the guest arrived. Caroline, who had enjoyed a great deal of social experience, could be a tactful hostess, and the dinner went off very pleasantly. Mr. Coolidge was so jolly and Gertrude entertained him so well that Caroline herself could scarcely realize that her guest was a stranger at their board. It seemed more as if Gertrude had lunched there once a week. Best of all, Miss Coolidge knew that her guest had hosts of men friends whom she was constantly inviting to her parties, and although the proud Caroline still had some misgivings as to what the Taylors' functions might be, she never doubted that Gertrude would be only too pleased to feel that she had a right to invite her. Then, if among the men she discovered one or two not impossible to be noticed by one whose family stood high in the smart set, she would flatter them so much that she could easily win their affections.

Hence, when Gertrude took her leave, saying, "I hope, Caroline, you will lunch with us to meet a girl from Baltimore, who is to be staying with me soon," Miss Coolidge was not well satisfied. She loathed the idea of Gertrude's pedigreeless girl friends; her whole inclination leaned to the men. She had seen Gertrude only the other day out walking with a very handsome and well-groomed man, and as he probably had money, her name was not Caroline Coolidge if she could not manage to make him appear as if he came from some other

city, and pass him off very nicely among her friends, if only he did not insist on having all his relatives at the wedding. When, therefore, a written invitation to Gertrude's luncheon came, Caroline would have infinitely preferred to refuse, had she not felt that then, perhaps, no more invitations would follow, and she would never have a chance to meet the handsome man with the good clothes.

Thus it was that Caroline went to Gertrude's luncheon-party, hoping soon to be asked to dinner or to play cards. She did her best, according to her own lights, to be agreeable, and addressed Gertrude as if she were a bosom friend. "Now," she said, to herself, "Gertrude will be so proud to have these girls think that I know her well that she will be eager to display the fact to her men friends." But time passed, and the luncheon invitation was not followed by any further "bids."

However, Miss Caroline, who did not intend to be balked, decided that Gertrude must be asked to an evening musical that her youngest sister, Miriam, was about to give. As Miriam was too amiable to object to what her sister did, Caroline sent Gertrude the invitation, and was not surprised to have it accepted.

Since Gertrude was in reality as young as Caroline pretended to be, the latter could not have said that her guest was out of place at this function if she had known any of the women there. With the men Gertrude seemed quite at home. Some, apparently, she knew already, while others were introduced to her by Mr. Coolidge, much to the vexation of his eldest daughter, who had not invited her neighbor to this party to have her enjoy herself, but to procure an invitation in return. Even in her own house Caroline was not the belle that Gertrude was, and at supper time she was particularly annoyed to see the one man of her own set on whom she still placed matrimonial hopes sitting on the stairs above the first landing with Gertrude. Their heads seemed horribly near together, and their mirthful conversa-

tion, although unheard by their observer, was none the less irritating.

Soon after the guests had finished eating and drinking, and there was nothing more for which to stay, the Misses Coolidge were busily saying "Good-night!" At last the couple on the stairs realized that the others were going, and came down to follow their example.

Miss Coolidge was able to detain the young man, who was no other than young Winthrop Winthrop, the best cotillion leader in Boston, long enough to say: "Don't you thin' I have done rather well to take Gertrude Taylor up? She is such a nice girl that it seems a shame she should never go anywhere."

"Doesn't she go out in Boston?" inquired the young man, in an indifferent tone. "I have heard a lot about her from some of my Baltimore friends. Of course, she could go out here if she cared about it. Good night! It has been awfully pleasant." So saying, he was off, leaving Caroline vexed beyond expression.

To have heard Winthrop Winthrop, of all people, saying that Gertrude Taylor could go anywhere in Boston if she chose, when she had never so much as been proposed at a sewing circle, and had not even had the distinction of being blackballed, was annoying to the last degree.

"Why are men so stupid?" poor Caroline vainly asked herself. "They cannot seem to understand that every well-dressed girl with pretty eyes is not in society," and the thought of Gertrude's beautiful eyes leveled on the man to whom Caroline would have offered her life, if she could have made him drop the smallest hint, drove the matrimonial aspirant nearly to distraction.

In a few weeks, however, Miss Coolidge's resentment toward her new protégée was a little appeased by an invitation from her to "a small cotillion." The thought that Winthrop Winthrop might be there was alike a pleasure and a grievance. She hated to think of his growing intimacy with Gertrude, yet she thirsted for

every opportunity of meeting him herself.

Her best and only new party dress she wore, and slyly in the afternoon she had found her way to Miss Mition, the hairdresser, hoping that with a perfect coiffure she might eclipse the owner of the soft, hazel eyes; for, if she could not secure Winthrop Winthrop for herself, she meant at least to find someone else.

Unfortunately she was not engaged for the cotillion beforehand, but she assured herself that she would be such a large toad in an inferior puddle that there would be no difficulty about that. In the dressing-room it made her feel a little homesick to know none of the girls, but down stairs she recognized three or four of the men who had been at her sister's musical. It was not long before each and all of them had danced with her, and then it was time for the cotillion to begin.

As no one had asked her to be his partner, her cup of sorrow was full without the added grief of seeing that Winthrop Winthrop was to lead the cotillion with Miss Taylor. The dance was forming. While young men with young ladies hanging on their arms were eagerly searching for their handkerchiefs, tied to the backs of chairs, Miss Coolidge sat alone. An eternal five minutes had elapsed before she saw Winthrop Winthrop crossing the room in her direction. Oh! worst of all humiliations, to be discovered in this plight by him!

"Have you no partner, Miss Coolidge?" he inquired.

With all the courage that the hired crimps in her hair could give, Miss Coolidge haughtily replied:

"No! I don't seem to know more than one or two of the men here, and I was just thinking that I might as well be going home."

"Oh, no! Don't think of such a thing. Just wait a second." So saying, he was off.

Shortly he returned, and without the preliminary of asking her permission he introduced "a gay little runt of a man" named Sweet. To spend an evening with this person, watching her quondam friend dancing with that prince of peerless partners, Winthrop Winthrop, was more than Miss Coolidge could endure, and so, pleading a headache, she left Mr. Sweet, with a request that he should say "Good-night!" for her to Miss Taylor, and inform her that she was not well. After some difficulty in procuring a carriage, Miss Coolidge found herself rumbling home, to take off her best ball gown dejectedly and unloose her perfectly dressed hair.

In another fortnight she again recognized Gertrude's handwriting on a crested envelope. She tore the contents in a thousand pieces when she had read:

DEAREST CAROLINE:

I wonder if you will be surprised to hear of my engagement to Mr. Winthrop Winthrop? You know I met him at your house, so you see you are largely responsible, and Winthrop and I both feel that we cannot thank you enough. I shall be at home to-morrow, when I shall hope to see you here. Do come without your hat and spend the whole afternoon, so that we can occasionally catch an opportunity for a confidential chat. I have so much to tell you.

Affectionately yours,
GERTRUDE M. TAYLOR.

Such was the death knell of Caroline Coolidge's pet schemes and hopes.



INFORMATION WANTED

MINISTER—My little man, didn't I hear you swear just now?
SMALL BOY—I don't know. What did I say?